

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 24 May 2022 at 7.30pm

1. Attendance and apologies

Cllr Frank Hobbs in the chair, Cllr Helen Calderbank, Cllr Christine Hobbs, Cllr Yvonne Mumford, Cllr John Pattrick, Cllr Dan Shaddick, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee and four members of the public.

Apologies for absence: Cllr Charlie Wilkins, County Councillor Susan Carey (FHDC Planning Meeting), Chris Reynolds, Gill Dixon.

2. Minutes of previous Annual Parish Meeting

Minutes of previous meeting held on 27 April 2021 were approved unanimously and signed.

3. Chairman's report - Cllr Frank Hobbs

Since my last report we have recommenced face-to-face meetings and are pleased to see you here in person tonight.

Local planning applications have on the whole been straight-forward, but there are still ongoing issues with Postling Lodge's retrospective application. The Outlook seems to have come to a halt, we understand that they have found the wrong sort of chalk to make the intended method of construction. Southfields on Farthing Common is to be re-built, but there are issues with the planners over the proposed size.

Otterpool Park slowly continues on its way and is now reached the stage of a second planning application which we will be reviewing shortly.

The Broadband update has finally arrived after numerous road closures and disruptions, and households are beginning to get themselves connected, we hope it will be worthwhile.

The state of local roads is a continuing problem, and will continue to be so, with KCC always being short of funds. We have been told that Cuckoo Lane could be improved in this financial year, but don't hold your breath too much. Please remember that you can always report faults by logging into the KCC Website.

We have purchased the Phone Box, and thanks to a grant from our District Councillors it has been renovated by a small army of willing volunteers. It now displays a history of the Parish, and will be officially opened on June 5th as part of the Jubilee celebrations. We are disappointed that the traditional bonfire will not be part of the national chain this time.

One thing that has caused some confusion is the Boundary Commission's recommendation that North Downs West ward of Folkestone & Hythe moves to Ashford parliamentary constituency. This is only for National Elections. We will still be part of Folkestone & Hythe District Council Area for local issues.

Finally I would like to thank Clare and the Councillors for all their time and efforts over the past 12 months and look forward to working with you all again this coming year.

Frank Hobbs, *Chairman, Postling Parish Council*

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4. Postling New Village Hall Association report

The committee has only met once for our AGM.

It is quite difficult to maintain the balance between a steady income stream from our regular nursery user and yet keep the Hall looking reasonably inviting for members of the Village to use when required. Hall usage over the past few years has been very even, which makes our job as a Committee relatively easy in terms of budgeting for repair work and improvements.

Now that lockdown restrictions are fully over, hall usage is back to pre-Covid levels with the nursery and table tennis as the main users.

We are now beginning to find that elements of the structure are beginning to show their age, consequently we will be replacing some of the pipework in the toilets this summer and also replacing the Velux windows.

Chris Reynolds, *Postling New Village Hall Association*

5. Appointment of Representatives to the Village Hall Association

Cllr Christine Hobbs proposed their re-election and all were in favour for the continuation of Chris Reynolds, Gill Dixon and Chris Clarke on the PNVH Committee.

6. District Councillors' report

Please see Appendix

7. Kent County Councillor's report

Please see Appendix

8. Presentation

A Kent Association of Local Councils Community Awards Scheme 2022 certificate will be presented to Dr Peter Le Feuvre and Dr Sarah Montgomery at the opening of the phone kiosk. The certificate is in recognition of their long-term community involvement and community initiatives during the pandemic.

9. For information

a. Nursery parking

Parishioners raised the issue of parking for the nursery at the village hall:

- driveways are regularly blocked
- cars parked opposite driveways cause access problems for residents
- residents' verges and driveways are not respected
- cars drive too fast for village roads.
- a staggered drop-off and pick-up time was suggested.

action: The Parish Council will write to the nursery managers to request they ask parents to drive and park legally and considerately.

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b. Village speed limit

Taking into account our narrow rural roads, no pavements, and the presence of a nursery school, a speed limit of 20mph was suggested for all of Postling. Although difficult to enforce, this would make drivers more aware of their speed and encourage safer driving.

A 20mph is often in place near schools (eg. Saltwood)

action: the clerk will approach KCC Highways for information on the process of requesting a speed limit reduction in order for councillors to discuss the matter at the July meeting.

Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee suggested Speedwatch equipment could be borrowed.

c. Speed of agricultural vehicles and road conditions

(also raised by a parishioner at the Annual Meeting)

- speed of agricultural vehicles is a great concern and a threat to the safety of all road users
- many farm vehicles are too wide for Sandling Road and are often driven at unsuitable and unsafe speeds
- width restrictions on Loughborough Lane are regularly ignored
- the driver of a large farm vehicle has been seen using his phone whilst driving
- concern was raised over lack of restrictions for oversized farm vehicles in rural areas
- potholes marked have not been repaired

action: (as noted in Annual Meeting minutes) the Parish Council will write to local farmers and landowners requesting they speak to their employees and suppliers to instruct them to drive legally, considerately and safely on our single track rural lanes; clerk to contact our parish Highways Steward to request a review of parish roads and a timetable for repairs.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for their attendance and contributions.

Meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Signed Chairman, May 2023

Appendix

District Councillors' Annual Report – May 2022

Susan Carey and Jenny Hollingsbee represent North Downs West Ward which includes the communities of Bodsham, Elmsted, Etchinghill, Lyminge, Postling, Sellindge, Stelling Minnis, Stanford, Stowting and all points between.

This report aims to give a brief summary of our work over the last two years – most of which has been during 'lockdown' which affected all our services either directly or indirectly.

All District Council Meetings and most Parish Council meetings were held virtually which meant we were able to attend more than usual as we could go straight from one zoom meeting to the next without needing to travel. Emails and phone calls continued as normal but services were hit by staff catching Covid or needing to isolate because a family member was vulnerable or because they'd been in contact with someone with Covid. Our kerbside waste collection service kept going throughout lockdown even taking on additional subscribers to the garden waste service but in May 2021 the renewal of our contract with Veolia saw a change in routes and computer systems which was badly managed. Whole streets were missed and eventually the garden waste collections were

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suspended till the new system could be stabilised. Thankfully we have now returned to a good level of reliability, garden waste services have resumed (with a suitable adjustment in payment for the missed collections) and we are now seeking compensation from Veolia.

The District Council was quick to react to the initial lockdown in March 2020 by setting up three Community Hubs within a week with dedicated email and telephone lines. The Community Hub for our area was run by Age UK Hythe & Lyminge. These hubs were extremely successful and a district wide network of support was set-up to deal with any issue arising from the Covid outbreak such as delivery of food and medicines to those shielding. Funding was provided via Government and the County Council and was distributed by the District Council. The Hubs worked in Partnership with GP Practices, calling all vulnerable patients on behalf of the Practice – they were also very much involved in the vaccination programme. The Partnership that developed through the Hubs continues with fortnightly meetings and is now also part of the Ukrainian Network Support that the District Council instigated with the Community.

The District Council were actively involved in the Vaccination programme and FOLCA (the old Debenhams building) was set-up as a Vaccination Centre, while the Civic Centre Car Park was utilised for Testing – a drive-in facility. Officers worked with Health Centre personnel to put these arrangements into operation at very short notice. The Community Safety Unit also worked extremely closely with the Police relating to the Covid lockdown regulations.

During this time also, the Policy & Places Plan was found sound by the Examination Inspector and just recently the Local Plan Review was also found to be sound. Both these documents have now been agreed by the full Council. The Council's plans for a new leisure centre, promenade, parks and homes at Princes Parade are now proceeding following a Public Enquiry into the realignment of the road. We believe this development will be as popular as the Harbour Arm in Folkestone and provide a much needed replacement for the swimming pool in Hythe.

On Otterpool Park, a revised planning application has been submitted and will be out for consultation shortly. The District Council Project team have been meeting regularly with Parish Councils who adjoin the planned development and it is expected that these liaison meetings will continue indefinitely. A programme of events has taken place and will continue to take place at Westenhanger Castle as well as a board game 'Telling the Otterpool Tale' being devised by Strange Cargo and distributed to Schools. See below for details of an up and coming event



We were sorry to see the end of the six month trial of wheel clamping for illegally parked HGVs which the Government authorised KCC to do as part of the transition arrangements for leaving the EU at the end of 2020. We have now reverted to the District Council officers issuing parking fines which are

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pursued where necessary by overseas debt collection agencies. We know HGVs can cause much damage and disturbance and we raise the issue at every opportunity.

Through our Ward Grants we have supported the following organisations over the last two years –

Etchinghill Residents Association	£ 250
Sellindge Tennis Club	£1,442
Sellindge Bowls Club	£ 500
Stour Downs Parish (Stowting Church)	£1,200
Lyminge Scouts	£2,608
Stelling Minnis Parish Council	£1,100
Stour Downs Parish (Sellindge Church)	£ 500
Stowting Primary School	£1,000
Stanford Parish Council (Defibrillators)	£ 600
Lyminge Primary School	£ 500
Postling – (phone box project)	£ 600
Sellindge War Memorial Hall (kitchen)	£1,000
Sellindge & District Playing Fields Benevolent Society (flagpole)	£ 700

Your District Council has also been working on projects to reduce its carbon emissions and those in the district. We are part of the KCC EV600 scheme where *Connected Kerb* is installing over 600 Electric Vehicle Charging Points in council car parks. Nearly 100 of these are in the Folkestone & Hythe District. We have won a £2m Government grant to improve energy efficiency in more than 100 council houses; this will also create local jobs as the contracts for the work are expected to be placed locally. Otterpool Park will also contribute to our Environment agenda through tree planting schemes and a 20% Net Biodiversity Gain commitment.

2021/22 Annual Report from Susan Carey

Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council for Postling Annual Meeting

I am pleased to report that Kent returned a Conservative majority in the Kent County Council elections on 06 May 2021 (60 Conservatives out of 80 places). Our own election here in Elham Valley was postponed until 17 June following the sudden death of the Labour candidate. I was re-elected on this date with just over half the votes cast. My thanks to all those who voted.

The last year has continued to be dominated by Covid-19 and its effects on our health and economy. KCC has worked closely with the NHS, the district councils, the voluntary sector and other partners on measures to encourage vaccination uptake, testing for Covid, tracking contacts, supporting the vulnerable and offering help where needed. **KentTogether** is our 24/7 online and telephone service where people can turn to for help and **Release the Pressure** is our long-standing helpline for those facing stress.

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As we have emerged from Covid-19 restrictions there has been a surge in demand for social care and for Special Education Needs assessments. This has placed considerable financial pressures on KCC's budget and has meant we have had to reduce some of our discretionary services such as the level of subsidy for the Kent Travel Saver (although those on low incomes are unaffected) and subsidies for uneconomic bus services.

At KCC I have a particular responsibility for our Environment work and am pleased to report that many of the projects I have been leading have had the added benefit of reducing costs by reducing energy use. In March 2021 KCC won a major grant from the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for projects that had to be delivered by April 2022. The most significant of these was the purchase of a 21MW solar park which will reduce our energy use by 30% and also reduce our annual energy costs by around £760,000 a year for the next 40 years.

KCC's Plan Tree Strategy has just finished its public consultation. Plan Tree proposes the establishment of an extra 1.5 million trees in Kent and as part of this each KCC Member will be allocated trees for their own division. I'd be very pleased to hear from people with ideas for suitable sites here in Postling Parish in addition to the site already identified by the village hall car park.

My Environment brief also covers waste disposal – the 12 district councils in Kent collect the waste, KCC disposes of the collected waste and runs the Household Waste Recycling Centres. KCC has been able to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to just 0.2% (this is asbestos which must by law be deep buried). What can't be recycled is turned into energy at an incinerator in Allington, Kent. Last year we held a consultation on whether to keep the booking system for the HWRCs that was introduced during Covid-19. There was a clear margin in favour of keeping the booking system (available both online and at our call centre 03000 41 73 73) and by the end of April same day bookings were introduced at all 18 HWRCs. Recycling rates are up at our HWRCs and a 19th HWRC opened in Allington on 09 May.

The disruption to our local road network and people's lives whenever there are delays to Cross Channel traffic has become intolerable. KCC does not control the ports or the motorways but Kent Highways is part of the Kent Resilience Forum together with National Highways, Kent Police and other public sector partners. We continue to lobby the Government on this as it is a national problem requiring a national response.

A similar issue is the continued high level of illegal entries into Kent by those seeking asylum. Adults and families are dispersed around the country but other local authorities must volunteer to take any under 18 year olds who arrive on their own. This has led to unsustainable burdens on KCC in dealing with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and twice in the last year we have had to declare we were unable to safely accept any more meaning we were in breach of our statutory duty. This has led to a temporary compulsory dispersal scheme to other local authorities around the country. This does not resolve the underlying problem but has relieved some of the immediate burden for Kent.

The invasion of Ukraine in February has been another crisis where local government has been expected to respond swiftly. Information for both Kent residents and Ukrainian refugees can be found at www.kent.gov.uk/ukraine Queries about the Ukraine Families Scheme can be emailed to Ukraine@kent.gov.uk or by calling the dedicated helpline 03000 412424 which has a translation service. The latest information I have on numbers is that 3,062 refugees have been matched to 1,235 sponsors here in Kent; the Ukrainian refugees are overwhelmingly women and children. Around 7,000 households in our County have volunteered to be part of *Homes for Ukraine*, one of the highest number in the UK, so we can expect to see many more Ukrainian people here in Kent. As with the Covid-19 emergency we are working closely with the District Councils, the voluntary sector and other public sector partners to provide the necessary support.