

POSTLING PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held at Postling Village Hall on Tuesday 26 March 2024 at 6.30pm

1. Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Cllrs Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, John Patrick, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, District Cllr Elaine Martin, County Cllr Susan Carey, and one member of the public.
Apologies: Cllrs Rob Lye, Daniel Shaddick, District Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee,
2. Co-option of a parish councillor
George Burgess was co-opted to the parish council, as proposed by Cllr Helen Calderbank, seconded by Cllr John Patrick and agreed unanimously. Acceptance of Office and Declaration of Pecuniary Interests forms were completed and will be forwarded to FHDC.
3. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2024.
4. There were no members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.
5. Public Participation session was not required.
6. Planning Applications received and circulated to Councillors for comments, outcomes of those deliberations, and to consider any applications received since this agenda was published:
 - a. **23/0580/FH Pent Farm, Pilgrims Way CT21 4EY**
Photovoltaic solar array, ancillary infrastructure, and landscaping.
PPC Objection. Chairman spoke at Planning Committee meeting on 19 March to oppose the application.
FHDC REFUSED.
7. Highways
 - a. Pot holes on Cuckoo Lane: these are due to be dealt with in the new financial year
 - b. Sandling Road: Report ref 779596 re. incomplete repairs to Sandling Road (between Cuckoo Lane and A20 Ashford Road). Highways have now made this safe.
 - c. Sandling Road temporary closure: Openreach, 10 May 2024. Closure between the junctions of Staple Lane and Cuckoo Lane, between the hours of 09:30 and 15:30 only.
8. Finance
 - a. Balance of account at 26 March 2024: £4,936.22
 - b. Payments and Receipts since last meeting:
Payments:

31.01.24 C Hamilton	Salary Dec Jan	430.56
31.01.24 C Hamilton	Travel exp Jan meeting	7.20
31.01.24 C Hamilton	123reg domain name renew	14.39
02.02.24 HSBC	bank charges Jan	8.00
05.02.24 HugoFox	Go Cardless - web hosting	11.99
04.03.24 HugoFox	Go Cardless - web hosting	11.99
04.03.24 HSBC	bank charges Feb	10.00

Receipts:

VAT reclaim 2023/24	65.11
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 - c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

C Hamilton	Salary Feb Mar	430.56
C Hamilton	Travel exp Mar meeting	7.20
C Hamilton	Annual expenses	49.83
HSBC	Bank charges Mar Apr	16.00
HugoFox	Website hosting Mar Apr	23.98 vat £4.00

Chairman Frank Hobbs

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

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Hopkins AED	Defibrillator service	114.00	vat £19.00
	Battery approx.	60.00	+vat
	Electrode pads approx.	52.00	+vat

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

9. Reports from District and County Councillors: see Appendix

10. Signage

A resident has installed temporary toad crossing signs near the Church, to be removed in the near future. Residents raised a request for speed limit reduction signs; this would have to be through a parish council-funded Highways Improvement Plan with a cost of at least £3,000 for background work before any speed limit reductions or signage could be considered. As the parish council does not have the budget for such works, these costs would have to be met by a huge increase to the Precept which councillors do not consider to be appropriate. Cllr Susan Carey pointed out that all signage on the highway requires planning permission from KCC.

11. Drainage Issues

Following problems with ice on The Street in winter months, water flow onto the highway from the East Stour stream, adjacent to Tolsford House and Fox Meadow, was discussed. Correspondence has been received detailing the contractor who carried out repairs in 2020 which appear to have failed, and this will be followed up with KCC.

12. Otterpool Park Working Party

The Otterpool Park Working Party meet bi-monthly and their sixth meeting was held on 21 February with the new manager and good attendance from the parishes.

It was reported that Homes England are back on board to fund the project. Sewerage works at the western end need to be built before anything else can progress and will be a reed bed system. Concerns about development traffic have been considered. The group is working with Network Rail to have Westenhanger station platforms lengthened for HS1. The aim is to have a solar park on south western corner of the development (nr port Lympe car park), houses will have solar panels. The need for social housing is recognised, and developers are rethinking plans to meet the need for the provision of some smaller houses.

13. Defibrillator

Defibrillator service and electrode replacements is in hand.

14. Website

WCAG2.2AA accessibility guidelines come into force in October. All websites hosted by HugoFox are already fully compliant with WCAG2.2AA.

15. For Information

- Meeting dates 2024: 28 May (Annual Meetings), 30 July, 24 September, 26 November
- Meeting closed at 7.20pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 28 May 2024

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Appendix Reports from District and County Councillors

District Councillor Elaine Martin

Asian Hornets

This is the time of year to start thinking about Asian Hornets again. The Asian Hornets have been hibernating for the winter and producing queens. Once the outside temperature hits 12 to 14 degrees for two or more consecutive days the queens will wake up, look for food and fly off to start a new nest. Asian Hornets attack any pollinators, not just bees, so it's important that any sightings are reported at once either by using the Asian Hornet Watch App or by emailing <mailto:alertnonnative@ceh.ac.uk>. There was a marked increase in the number of sightings last year and even more are expected this year.

Budget

A balanced budget was passed by F&HDC without having to use the reserves. To maintain front line services, there has had to be a 2.9% increase in local Council Tax, in addition, other various KCC and Parish precepts have also increased. The HRA budget was also approved resulting in a 7.7% increase in rents, this is in line with the Government recommendation. With the ongoing cost of living crisis, this is not an ideal time for increased housing costs. Please check the Council's website for details of help and support that can be provided if you are affected by this.

Rural Prosperity Grants and Green Business Grants

Recently, there have been several Rural Prosperity and Green Business grants awarded. Two of which have been given in this Ward; one in Stowting and one in Sellindge. These grants are designed for businesses and communities to reduce their carbon footprint, reduce energy consumption and costs.

Otterpool Park

Otterpool Park is making progress. Homes England are back on board and discussions continue. While the team were very disappointed that the strategic partnership with the Crown Estates did not happen the work with Homes England seems very likely to finally unlock the site. Property consultants Savills have been instructed to remodel the site in terms of finance, viability and phasing.

School Sustainability Projects

A very successful School Sustainability Project day was recently held at the Council Chambers. It is a trial initiative, initially with three primary schools involved: Elham Primary, Churchill Primary and Sellindge Primary schools. All three schools presented their excellent plans for a sustainable garden at their school.

Landslides

There have been several landslides along the Folkestone part of the coast and the Road of Remembrance remains shut. F&HDC have completed the works they are responsible for: all shrubs and sycamore trees were removed, and 12 evergreen oak trees were coppiced to form a low hedge. A LIDAR survey has been carried out and the results are being assessed to see if any other works need to be carried out to make the area safe. The road remains closed until it is confirmed that the road is safe enough for KCC operative to clear the fallen trees and do the necessary repairs.

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

District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee

Pent Solar Farm – The planning application for the Solar Park was discussed at the Planning & Licensing Committee on 19 February. The Officer recommendation for refusal of the Planning Application was approved by 7 votes to 4.

Otterpool Park – Talks are continuing with Homes England and other Government Agencies on how the project will move forward. The inevitable delay in delivery of the project means that the District Council will find it difficult to meet its housing target. The Leader has confirmed that this year there will be a 'call for sites' to allow the council to create the five year land supply line as required by Government.

My Community Voice – [Home Page - My Community Voice Kent](#) - is 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

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about your local area directly from the police officers themselves. It is more than just a messaging service; it allows you to reply to the alerts the Police send you, share information and tell them about the issues affecting you. It also keeps you informed of current scams.

Folkestone – what an accolade for our Town to be crowned the best place to live in the south east of England by the Sunday Times. The judges talk about our “eye-catching culture-led regeneration”. They praised our “artists’ studios, the cool shops on the Old High Street and the Harbour Arm. The judges also noted the town’s “impressive schools, state-of-the-art sports facilities and high-speed trains to London”.

Levelling-up Fund – In January 2023, under the previous Administration, the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced the Council’s funding bid was successful and £19.8m was awarded. Our plan - A Brighter Future - will breathe new life into Folkestone and radically improve the complicated road network, making it much easier for residents and visitors to access the town centre: preliminary grounds investigations are due to begin later this month and all work completed by March 2025. For further details [Folkestone Levelling Up - Public engagement November 2023 | Folkestone & Hythe District Council \(folkestone-hythe.gov.uk\)](#)

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

County Councillor Susan Carey

KCC’s campaign continues for more to be done in preparation for the new EU Entry Exit System (EES) which is expected to start on 06 October. The change has the potential to cause major disruption to our roads in Kent and this can be mitigated if the Government allows more of the checking to be done in advance. A report on this issue went to KCC’s Environment and Transport Cabinet Committee on 07 March and to KCC’s Cabinet on 21 March - you can read the report and watch the debates on the KCC website www.kent.gov.uk

Another current campaign is the one to restore the Kent stops for Eurostar services. There is a petition on this which has nearly reached 50,000 signatures. If you’d like to support it you can sign the [online petition](#). KCC has also surveyed Kent businesses and found strong support for the reintroduction of the Kent stops. I know Damian Green MP, Ashford Borough Council and KCC are all involved in the campaign to persuade Eurostar to restore the services.

KCC has launched a Biodiversity Net Gain Site Register for Kent. Since 12 February all developments with over ten houses are required to deliver a 10% increase in biodiversity. The aim is for this improvement to be delivered on the site itself but if this is impractical then the site register will provide a pipeline of suitable land to deliver this commitment. The Making Space for Nature Kent website has more details on this.

Do please keep reporting potholes preferably on the KCC website or to 03000 41 81 81. Nearly 60,000 potholes were repaired on Kent’s roads between April and December 2023 and the work continues. The Government has allocated Kent £135m of additional funding over the next 11 years for road repairs. £8.6m of this will be spent between March and October this year. This is on top of the £50m in KCC’s own road and footway maintenance budget. Reporting by residents really helps make sure no problems are missed.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley

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