



ACOL PARISH COUNCIL

The Village Hall
The Street
Acol
Kent CT7 0JA

e-mail: clerk@acolparishcouncil.org.uk

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 17th October 2024 at 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors Richard Steel – Chairman [RS], Kate Ruranski [KR], Gavin Winpenny [GW], Wendy Winpenny [WW]

In Attendance: KCC Cllr Derek Crown-Brown, KCC Cllr Linda Wright, District Cllr Abi Smith, PC Andy Howe plus Sara Archer – Clerk, and 4 members of the public.

41/24-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sarah Corby

42/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests declared.

43/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on 15th August 2024. These were proposed by Cllr G Winpenny, seconded by Cllr Ruranski, all were in agreement and therefore signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

44/24-25 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman advised that a new waste bin had been installed outside the Village Hall, and wheelie bins had been provided by TDC for use at the Recreation Ground. Cllrs Winpenny had volunteered to ensure the bins were ready for collection on the appropriate day.

Cllr Steel had attended the Thanet Area committee meeting, which was currently focused on planning.

A briefing was held by KCC regarding Highways and Transportation. Planning system failures with regard to water drainage etc... were noted, along with the reality of very little funding being available.

Cllr Steel had also attended the Police Crime Commissioner briefing, representing the TAC, in his role as Vice-Chair of the Committee. A consultation was currently underway, which residents were encouraged to complete the online survey. A short discussion took place with regard to Policing recruitment and retention. As mentioned at previous meetings, a welcome pack for new residents was in progress.

A Community Resilience Plan had been discussed at the Thanet Rural Regeneration Group, and it had been suggested that Acol and the smaller surrounding villages worked together to develop a Plan.

Cllr Steel concluded his report by wishing sincere condolences to the family of Mr Jon Inchley, who had recently passed. Jon had been an active member of the community, undertaking a number of roles during his time in the village, including Chair of the Village Hall Committee and past Councillor, plus editor of the Village Voice. The funeral would be held on 21st October, with all welcome to attend.

Cllr Steel had suggested at a previous meeting, that the Parish Council should consider taking a more active role with the Village Voice. Birchington PC would be approached to enquire whether Acol could contribute to their Community Ad magazine. This was discussed and agreed to support the proposal if necessary.

45/24-25 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk advised she had applied for and received a grant of £500 from the KCC Members Fund for funding towards the upgrade of the CCTV. Thanks were extended to the KCC Councillors for their support with the project.

A grant was also in progress for funding towards planters in the Village.

The Boundary Commission had commenced a consultation for new wards, ward boundaries and ward names for TDC. This would have little impact on the Village, however, residents could respond online via the Boundary Commission website. The consultation closes 16th December 2024.

The Police Crime Commissioner survey, as previously mentioned could be accessed online via their website. The Clerk confirmed the CCTV upgrade was in hand. The company instructed to complete the works were undergoing some internal changes and would be completing the work as soon as possible.

The Insurance company had been contacted to enquire about individual Councillors transporting residents to and from a village event. No response had been received to date.

Correspondence had been received from Action with Communities in Rural England with regard to historic Village Hall files. The Clerk explained that following the closure of the ACRK, a significant number of village hall files were being held which needed to be returned to the owners accordingly. It was confirmed that this was not applicable to Acol.

The Clerk had been making enquiries with regard to the transfer of email accounts to a '.gov.uk' address. The process was complicated and would incur additional expense. The proposal was discussed and it was agreed to remain with the existing email addresses, however, Hugofox had advised the website could be transferred to a '.gov.uk' for no charge. It was therefore agreed to go ahead with the transfer of the website domain only.

RESOLVED: To transfer the website domain name to a .gov.uk domain for no charge with Hugofox.

Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Ruranski

46/24-25 COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Cllr W Winpenny advised the repairs to the bridge on the play equipment had been carried out immediately by Cllr G Winpenny. The waste wheelie bins would be placed at either end of the Recreation Ground, and put out for collection accordingly. The basketball hoop required replacement. Options for a replacement would be considered and suggestions reported at the next meeting.

It was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan analysis from the survey would be made available at the next meeting. It was noted that both KALC and TAC were encouraging local Councils to produce a Plan. Collaboration with neighbouring Parishes would be explored.

Cllr Steel advised he would follow up the outstanding item regarding the footpath to Quex.

Cllr Ruranski had been working with **Cllr Corby** to introduce a coffee morning for older and vulnerable residents. It is hoped that this will commence in November/December, providing residents with transportation support if needed.

47/24-25 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS

- a) **County Cllr Linda Wright** fully supported the production of a Neighbourhood Plan, and advised she had a small amount of funding available for any projects that may require a grant. Cllr Wright would follow up the suggested route for Acol with the Highways Officer.

County Cllr Derek Crow-Brown submitted the following report:

Highways

The number of road closures in the county has rocketed in the past four years, new figures have revealed.

Permits issued to shut the highways temporarily have shot up in recent years, particularly those by utility companies.

In 2020-21 there were 6,604 closures for utilities which leapt to 10,296 in 2023-24 while KCC works rose from 3,477 to 5,992 in the same period.

Much of the work is associated with house building in the county while KCC must carry out essential maintenance and repairs, such as pothole patching.

1,300 fines have been issued this year to contractors not complying with the terms of the temporary closure permits with fines totalling £95,000. Fines are set nationally and my Highways committee believe they should be much higher to deter contractors from breaking their terms.

- b) **District Cllr Abi Smith** advised that the Planning Committee at TDC had deferred the decision with regard to the substantial housing development at Birchington. It had been encouraging to hear the detailed questioning and objections raised across the Chamber. Affordable housing requirements were discussed, along with the position of the Local Plan.

Cllr Smith had attended a meeting regarding the proposed Travellers Site at Shottendane Road. A consultation was open online for residents to express their views on the proposal.

A meeting with the Home Office had taken place to discuss the Manston Immigration Centre. It was made clear by TDC that the information provided by the HO was inadequate to enable a proper assessment of the proposal.

- c) **Ward Police Officer Andy Howe** reported as follows:

The September statistics show a lower-than-average crime count for the villages with the only standout offence being the sexual offences, however, please do not be concerned over this as one incident resulted in multiple reports which related to a well known public sex location. This location has been monitored by both proactive units and myself resulting in over twenty vehicle stops and verbal warnings, two persons have been arrested in relation to the recorded offences. These activities pose little to no threat to the general public and I am looking into a longer-term solution to the anti-social activities.

Regarding Acol, only nine calls to Acol since the start of September of which 4 were traffic related. The remainder included one Poaching call and four un-associated domesticated incidents.

Kent Police have conducted several traffic stops in the area over the last month including pop up speed checks on the Minster Road by myself. A number of traffic Offence Reports were issued during the operation and multiple vehicles were seized for traffic offences such as no licence or insurance.

We will be conducting further such operations on a monthly basis, and I have submitted requests for checks to be conducted in Acol on Margate hill and Minster Road.

48/24-25 HIGHWAYS

- a) Speedwatch/Lorry Watch Scheme – Item previously covered during the meeting.
- b) Street Cleansing, litter, fly-tipping – As previously discussed. More frequent street cleansing was being explored by TDC.
- c) Highways Improvement Plan – No further update.

The overgrown hedges at the water pumping station and electricity substation at Crispe Road had been reported accordingly but no response received. Cllr Crow-Brown would follow this up on behalf of the Parish Council.

49/24-25 FINANCE

- a) The Clerk presented the monthly bank reconciliation between the cash book and bank accounts.

RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for August & September (Proposed: Cllr G Winpenny, seconded Cllr W Winpenny).

- b) The Clerk presented the monthly payment schedule which included the following payments:

D. Smith - Repair to fingerpost sign	£175.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.12
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00
Viking - Stationary	£82.04
Hughes & Son - Grass cutting	£240.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.12
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
Hughes & Son - Grass cutting	£160.00
Hughes & Son - Grass cutting	£160.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.12
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00
Unity Trust - Service charge	£18.00

Receipts:

TDC Precept	£5,155.50
KCC - Grant towards CCTV upgrade	£500.00
Unity Trust - Interest	£113.06

RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for October. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr W Winpenny).

- c) The Clerk presented the Q2 budget update which was noted with no comments. Cllr Wright advised of a number of funding streams which could be explored should the application criteria be met.
- d) Cllr Steel requested the retrospective approval for the purchase of a manual speed camera. The camera would aid the data collection of speed infringements at speedwatch sessions.

RESOLVED: To approve the purchase of the manual speed camera for use during speedwatch sessions in Acol.

(Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Ruranski)

- e) The transition to a .gov.uk email address had been previously discussed during the meeting.

RESOLVED: To approve the proposal to transfer website domain to a .gov.uk via Hugofox, for no charge. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Ruranski)

50/24-25 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- The New Years Eve village celebration was discussed. Cllr Corby and Karen Ault were making the necessary arrangements. Funding had been kindly been offered by the Village Hall Committee. Cllrs Steel and W Winpenny volunteered to deliver flyers about the event, and it was suggested it was also included in the next magazine.

51/24-25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 19th December 2024, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall – APOLOGIES noted from Cllr Abi Smith.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 20:34hrs