



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 15th August 2024 at 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall

Present: Parish Councillors Richard Steel – Chairman [RS], Sarah Corby [SC], Kate Ruranski [KR]

In Attendance: KCC Cllr Linda Wright, District Cllr Abi Smith, Sara Archer – Clerk, plus 3 members of the public.

29/24-25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Gavin Winpenny, Cllr Wendy Winpenny

30/24-25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Steel declared an interest – Item 37 (a) – travel expenses incurred.

31/24-25 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

RESOLVED: To approve the minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting held on 20th June 2024.

These were proposed by Cllr Corby, seconded by Cllr Steel, all were in agreement and therefore signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

32/24-25 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Steel advised he had written to the event organisers of the recent festival held at Quex, and copied to the management of the Park, to request the festival traffic and overweight vehicles are diverted away from the Village, respecting the weight limit in force.

At the last Thanet Area Committee meeting, Cllr Steel confirmed he was attempting to gain support for the implementation of the 20mph speed restriction in Acol.

Thanks were extended to the Councillors involved with the installation of the new bench at the recreation Ground, which had been well received by local users.

33/24-25 CLERK'S REPORT

The Clerk confirmed she and the Chair, had met with Matthew Elmer – TDC Head of Cleansing Services to discuss the request for litter bins in the Village, and waste collection points for litter picking. The meeting was positive, and the request would be followed up in due course.

The Clerk had updated the Code of Conduct and Financial Regulations recently issued by TDC and NALC respectively. These had been circulated and would be discussed further under item 38.

The Clerk advised there would be a Parish Council Forum meeting being held on 3rd September, 2pm, at TDC. She had sent her apologies, however, the Chair was able to attend.

Correspondence had been received from 'Save Our Fields' and KCC Growth Programme, which had been circulated to the PC, and further information available to residents online via the social media pages.

A planning application had been received – TCA/TH/24/0967 – Carriage House, Dilnot Lane, Acol.

This was discussed and agreed to defer to the Tree Officer at TDC. No objections were noted.

Following the discussion regarding tree felling, it was suggested by a resident, to approach TDC and propose that a five year forward plan to plant trees in anticipation of those likely to be removed, was considered. This would enable the trees being replanted to be more established.

34/24-25 COUNCILLOR'S REPORTS

Cllr Corby confirmed the new bench had been installed in the Recreation Ground, and she had responded to the query regarding the planters on the facebook page.

The Committee had met to discuss the Freedom of Acol awards.

Unfortunately, it had been noted that the editor of the Village Voice was unwell in hospital. The Parish Council were keen to ensure the magazine was maintained and would discuss the way forward with the editor, at an appropriate time.

It was suggested a monthly afternoon tea was held in the village hall, for anyone to attend and make friends and enjoy the company of others. A welcome pack for new residents, containing useful information about the village, was also discussed.

Cllr Ruranski reported she had met with Cllr Wright regarding new planters for the village. Cllr Wright had advised that Southern Water could be approached for planters to be donated to the PC and would forward the contact details to Cllr Ruranski accordingly.

The Horticultural Society had been approached for advice with regard to the soil and appropriate plants for the planters.

Cllr Wright had queried whether the green at Nursery Fields could be protected as Village Green status with a view to safeguarding the area from a potential compulsory purchase. It was confirmed that the green was privately owned by the Nursery Fields Residents Committee. The Director of the Committee would make enquiries and review the status of the green as necessary.

35/24-25 INDIVIDUAL OFFICER REPORTS

- a) **County Cllr Linda Wright** advised she had a small amount of funding available and would support the purchase of planters for the village.
County Cllr Derek Crow-Brown was unable to attend the meeting, however, he had submitted the following report which was read by the Chair:
Congratulations to Sir Roger Gale winning the Herne Bay and Sandwich constituency. As you are aware, Roger is a good friend of Acol and will continue to serve the public well.
Despite being August, I am still receiving a lot of casework.
The cancellation of the Winter Fuel Allowance for those not receiving pension credits has drawn lots of anger, especially from those just above the pension threshold.
Housing
I was recently interviewed by Kent Online, regarding the new government planning to relax planning rules. I stated that having seven parish and town councils in my division, there is much anger already, regarding overdevelopment of Thanet. I stated is not being a Nimby, it is about the loss of nature, wildlife, trees and food security, especially having the best agricultural farmland in the county. People are generally concerned about the biodiversity loss and additional traffic, especially in the villages, making travel more dangerous.
In the Thanet villages, we have many angry, intelligent, well-organised and well-funded voters, who will fight large scale, poorly built housing to the bitter end.
- b) **District Cllr Abi Smith** reported the second consultation regarding the power converter station closed on Sunday. Further consultation was expected, the matter was ongoing.
Cllr Smith offered to attend the Parish Council Forum if it was felt to be beneficial for the PC.
Cllr Smith also offered her support for the attendance of the 'Save Our Fields' group to attend the next Thanet Area Committee meeting.
- c) **Ward Police Officer Andy Howe** was unable to attend, however, he submitted the following report which was read by the Chair as follows:
Thanet Villages:
As you will see, we have seen a slight rise in violence against the person offences, these usually go arm in arm with improved weather conditions and alcohol consumption around football internationals so I don't think we should be too concerned.
I will investigate the sexual offences increase but I believe these were linked to a small number of stalking/accosting calls. Whilst I am unable to give specifics, I can tell you that I have identified a person involved and they have been dealt with via a Community Protection Warning resulting in no further calls of this type.
Since returning from leave I have been abstracted nearly daily due to call demand and operational requirements such as Dreamland Events, Op Island (Thanet Beaches) and more recently the civil unrest. I have been visiting vulnerable religious sites such as Mosques and Synagogues to provide a visible policing presence along with my usual visits to where illegal migrants are housed and processed.
Acol:
Only six calls since 12/07/24 from the Acol area, of which two were fraud based associated to the same persons. The remaining being traffic related and a burglary other than dwelling where outbuildings were broken into with no notable thefts from within. This incident was filed as the time period was too great for reviews to be reasonably expected where there was no notable loss.

36/24-25 HIGHWAYS

- a) Speedwatch/Lorry Watch Scheme – Cllr Steel advised the recent joint session held with Kent Police had been successful. He had requested that Road Safety was included as a standing item on the Thanet Area Committee agenda, suggesting that initiatives such as the 20mph speed reduction and Highways Improvement Plans could be collaborated with other villages to share resources where possible.
Breaches of the weight restriction through the village would continue to be monitored. Cllr Steel would write to Neil Baker – KCC and Matthew Scott – Police Crime Commissioner, to campaign for the use of CCTV footage to be used as evidence of the contraventions of the weight limit restrictions.
- b) Street Cleansing, litter, fly-tipping – As previously discussed.
- c) Highways Improvement Plan – No further update.

37/24-25 FINANCE

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

RESOLVED: To approve the monthly bank reconciliation for June & July (Proposed: Cllr Steel, seconded Cllr Corby).

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

R. Steel - Meeting travel expenses	£18.50
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.12
ATS Accounting - Payroll admin	£80.00
Hughes & Son - Grass cutting	£160.00
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00
Unity Trust - Service charge	£18.00
C. Flynn - Clerk Cover	£50.00
S. Archer - Clerk's salary & expenses	£269.12
Hugofox - Website hosting fee	£11.99
D. Hayfield - CCTV electricity donation	£60.00
Ionos - Email hosting fee	£3.00

Receipts:

Unity Trust - Bank Interest	£103.30
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RESOLVED: To approve payment of invoices included in the monthly payment schedule for August. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Corby).

38/24-25 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Clerk advised that revised financial regulations had been issued by NALC and a revised Code of Conduct had been issued by TDC for review and adoption. These had been circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. No concerns had been raised and it was therefore agreed to approve the documents with immediate effect. These would then be reviewed on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: To approve the Financial Regulations 2024 and Code of Conduct 2024 documents. (Proposed: Cllr Steel, Seconded: Cllr Ruranski)

39/24-25 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- It was noted that the Neighbourhood Plan was progressing slowly. There was an expectation that the new Government would be introducing changes that would affect the initiative, therefore, it would be held in abeyance until the amendments had been clarified. The results from the village survey would be published online.
- An additional bench at the Recreation Ground was discussed, and when possible, it was suggested that it could be installed near the gate at the rear of the grounds, on the route towards Quex.
- Regrowth on the trees which were cut down to disease at the Recreation Ground had been observed.
- A New Years Eve party at the village hall was discussed. If the event was supported by residents, arrangements would be put in place as per previous years.
- The addition of appropriate signage along Crispe Road was requested to be included in the Highways Improvement Plan. This would be updated and resubmitted to KCC for consideration, in due course.
- Concern was raised regarding a person acting suspiciously, weedkilling in the village. Enquiries had been made with KCC to confirm they were an appointed KCC operative as they were unable to provide ID when approached. Cllr Wright offered to follow this up on behalf of the PC.
- The paintwork on the Nursery Fields fingerpost was in need of attention.
- The Chair would contact Quex Park regarding the traffic route for their next event to ensure it is not directed through the village.

40/24-25 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 17th October 2024, 7:30pm, Acol Village Hall

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 20:35hrs