

Minutes of General Meeting at 7pm on Wednesday 11th September 2024 at Sturry Social Centre.

Present:

Cllr Ashley Bubb (Chair) Cllr John Hogben (Vice Chair), Cllr Heather Taylor, Cllr Steve Birch, Cllr Alan Mitchell, Cllr Gill Betts and Cllr Chris Gartland.

Ken Dekker Clerk, Alan Webster Caretaker, Ken Bullock Cemetery Superintendent.

4 residents in attendance.

170-24: Apologies for absence

Cllr Davis Family Commitments, KCC Cllr Marsh has another meeting, CCC Cllr Moses has another commitment.

Cllr Bubb announced that Cllr Karen Isaac has resigned from the Council and stated that he would like to thank Karen for all the work that she has done whilst on the Council.

Public questions.

There were no questions from the public.

171-24: To receive Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests and Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests on any agenda items and a reminder to think of any changes to the DPI register held at CCC, such as change of job or home.

None

172-24: To approve the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Wednesday 10th July 2024.

Proposed by Cllr.Bubb and seconded by Cllr.Hogben.
Cllr Garland abstained and all other Cllrs.in agreement

173-24: Matters arising from minutes of the Parish meeting on Wednesday 10th July 2024.

Cllr Taylor asked how things were going with the solicitors for the Social Centre ownership, this is coming up later in the meeting.

174-24: Chairman and Councillors' reports.

Cllr. Birch stated that he had attended the Broad Oak Bat & Trao event He has also been helping the caretaker with the Topsoil and compost bins at the cemetery.

He has also been busy with Payback group working at Broad Oak.

Cllr Taylor stated that she has also been helping the payback team.

She also attended the Broad Oak Bat & trap event.

She attended the twinning Association Fair.

She Attended the Sturry Social Centre Meeting.

Cllr Hogben stated that he had attended the Valencia Meeting.

Cllr Davis's report.

I attended the KALC meeting on Monday 2nd September at Hersden Community Centre. This was better attended than the previous meeting and we had a good presentation from the Kent Resilience Forum. I have left two copies of the information pack with Ken in the parish office and have forwarded to Ken the later email from Chenice, (KALK Secretary) with the meeting minutes and links to the Resilience websites. I hope that at a later meeting we will be able to consider Sturry PC's response to this initiative and questionnaire.

Social Centre ownership – The Social Centre has commissioned its own solicitor, Rickards and Cleaver, to examine the trail of documentation relating to the ownership and management of the centre. I have also provided Ken with all this documentation for the PC's solicitor. Unfortunately, there seems no way of avoiding two sets of legal fees as no one solicitor will represent both parties. I will inform the PC of comments that we receive from Rickards and Cleaver.

The Social Centre's AGM will be held on Saturday 21st September in the Social Centre at 17.00. This is an open meeting and all residents of Sturry and Broad are invited to attend. One of the main items will consideration of a new constitution using the appropriate Charity Commission's template. This will bring our constitution up to date, in particular, with the current situation with regard to regular hirers of the hall. Following adoption of a new constitution we will approach the PC for a management agreement. The lack of stand-alone and up to date constitution and management agreement was one major obstacle to getting funding from major funders such as The Lottery Fund and Veolia and we hope that getting these in place will help with fund raising for future projects.

The Committee's thanks go out to the Parish Council for its funding and support for the kitchen modernisation, this is now complete and all monies in excess of £40,000 spent by the Parish Council have been refunded by the Social Committee. The total project cost is a little over £59,000 with £1,500 coming from private donations and £17,500 coming from the Social Centre's own funds.

For item 193-24 Donation for Village Halls. A comment from me - I was expecting to see a resolution on how to fast track emergency funding for village halls as we voted not make the £1,000 donation in June and this decision must stand for the time being. The decision, in June, to fast-track emergency funding is probably better than simply donating £1,000 annually since it could be specific in terms of timing, funding

amount and purpose. I have looked at our Financial Regulations and I'm afraid that the delegated emergency spending provision for our clerk only applies to the provision of Parish Council Services so another mechanism will need to be agreed and written into the regulations.

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The Clerk stated that all documents have been forwarded to the solicitors for confirmation that we do own the Social Centre.

175-24: County and District Councillors' reports.

No reports.

176-24: Community Warden report.

In August I dealt with the following:

I have been undertaking Visible Presence when time permits within the village during August, while still covering Greenhill, Hersden and Hoath,

Signed: Date: 9th October 2024

and undertaking agency referrals when I receive them. But last week I was on annual leave.

I have been checking known hotspots for flytipping.

I have attended St Nicolas Church Coffee Mornings and spoken to residents, none of which raised any concerns that required warden assistance.

I have kept in contact with Sturry Parish Council checking if there were any issues to deal with.

I am contactable by mobile or email, and willing to meet with residents to discuss any community issues or assist with any personal advice

My contact details are: Roger Lithgow - KCC Community Warden. Mobile: 07813 713083. Email: roger.lithgow@kent.gov.uk

177-24: Village Caretaker's report.

He has been busy with the construction of the Topsoil and compost bins in the Cemetery and helped by Cllr Birch.

He has been working on Broad Oak Village Green and has refurbished the bench there.

Tidied up some fly tipping and carried out his normal duties.

178-24: Cemetery Superintendent's Report.

Admin Work:

We have dealt with numerous enquiries as business as usual.

Cemetery Database:

Work has continued on adding the interment records from Burial Register 1 (7th June 1933 to 15th Jan 1987) to the database. So far, I have completed 258 (165) Deeds and 346 (223) associated Interments.

Cemetery Other:

Since my last report, we have had 1 burial and 2 burials of cremated remains. I currently have no burials pending.

I have issued two approvals for monuments, two Exclusive Rights of Burial (ERoB) and transferred one ERoB.

The southern border of the cemetery has now been cleared by contractors ready for the planting of a new hedge this winter. I personally am very pleased with the quality of the work carried out and the outcome.

The new cherry trees in the drive have settled in well, with all 3 surviving. The overgrown yew in the drive has been cut down. The first of the old yews in the cemetery has been cut down and the stump removed.

I have updated the Cemetery Improvement Plan. We are now up to version 4, which has been published on the website. I do however still have further items to add to the plan.

We have carried out further safety surveys of the monuments. So far, we have assessed 451 grave spaces. 20 monuments require some form of action. I will be bringing a proposal to the Council for resolving the issues, as most of these old grave's owners cannot be traced.

We have now changed the Cemetery Access Code. The code has been issued to 20 people (including 8 members of the public).

We have completed the composting and topsoil bins in the Cemetery. I would like to Thank Councillor Birch and Alan for all their hard work in constructing the bins.

179-24: Clerks Report.

We have dealt with the usual resident's enquiries over the last two months.

I have carried on with the archiving of old files from the shelves in the alcove.

There were a couple of files that required to be stored in the fireproof cabinet due to their age.

We have finally sold the printer and the money from this sale will be used to update the office.

I have now started to update the policies and procedures, and I have also updated the Staff Handbook. When I have a few more completed I will distribute them around the councillors for comments once this has been done, they will be brought to council for adoption.

I have been told that the Bobby on the Beat is changing, and Simon stated that he will bring in the new officer and introduce him to us.

The Heras fencing at Centenary Woodland has been taken down and will be removed to the Cemetery for storage.

The new notice boards have been ordered and are expected to arrive towards the end of September.

I contacted KCC regarding the direction signs for the new post office, a request has formally been set up.

I would like to let you know that in the very near future we are going to require to upgrade the computers in the office. I have checked with Highways our IT people and the computers are over seven years old, and the operating system is due to upgrade soon which will not be able to be done on the present computers, also my computer is making some very strange noises, and I feel that one day it will crash beyond repair. Unfortunately the quote arrived too late to be put on the agenda, this will be on the next agenda or possibly before if my computer crashes. The total price for two complete computer systems and setup and installation is £1620 exc VAT.

The external Auditors have completed their audit of our Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR). Their opinion of the limited assurance is as follows:

On the basis of our review of sections 1 & 2 of the AGAR in our opinion the information in sections 1 & 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that the relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

In their completion letter it also states.

Minor scope for improvements in 2024 / 2025.

No minor issues identified.

I do believe that this is the first year since 2018 / 2019 this has happened.

Cllr Taylor asked if one of the old computers could be set up for Cllr's use when the new systems are in place. This could be done, and the IT company would be asked if this is possible.

180-24: Outside Bodies members reports.

Cllr Taylor stated that the kitchen work has been finished. She mentioned that the Social Centre had not followed procedure for the use of the notice board on Bakery Green and in future to go through the office.

181-24: Finance

(a) Payments for approval. Proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Mitchell and all in agreement.

Signed: Date: 9th October 2024

£2634.60	Zurich	Yearly Insurance
£40	David Hards	Mole Catcher
£28.51	Mustang washrooms	Toilet Cleaner
£180	Satswana	Data Protection Officer
£190.40	Brandon Hire	Construction of Bins (Topsoil) in Cemetery
£1250.89	John Caddick	Grounds Maintenance

(b) Accounts for approval and signature. Two Councillors signed.

Cllr Taylor wanted to know who had given permission to Sturry Social Centre to overspend and it should be sorted out if not she will be going to CCC and the Police.

182-24 Finance Committee Chair requires to be voted on.

Cllr Bubb stated that he would step in as Temporary Chair.
All in agreement.

183-24. To discuss and agree paying the grave digger when his invoices come in.

All Cllr agreed that as we have been paid in advance this should be done.

184-24 To discuss and agree arrangements for the next Joint Parish Meeting.

There was a discussion on what is going to be required.
A date needs to be arranged and then everything else can be arranged.
Bring back to next meeting

185-24. To discuss and agree on the purchase of gate springs for the Play Park.

There was a discussion on what type of gate closer and how many.
It was decided to go with the cheaper version and if they don't last then it will have to be decided to use a more expensive type.
Proposed by Cllr Hogben and Seconded by Cllr Bubb,
Cllr Birch voted against and Cllr Taylor Abstained.

186-24. To discuss and agree committee / working group for the organisation of the Christmas Fair.

Cllr. Bubb read out the Terms of Reference for this group. And the group will be appointed in accordance with our appropriate Policy.

The group consists of:
Cllrs Garland, Hogben, Mitchell and Bubb.
Cllr Birch will assist when needed.

187-24. To discuss and agree on supplying Defibrillators in at least two new locations in Sturry.

Cllr Garland explained that this is something that is needed in the Parish, he stated that the two position that would suit is the shops at Holmeswood Road and the new Tesco store on Herne bay Road.

The Council thought this is a good idea.

Proposed by Cllr Garland, Seconded by Cllr Betts all in agreement.

188-24. Update on the Dementia Choir.

This is a follow up to the report that was brought to you in July regarding setting up a 'dementia' choir (a term I don't particularly like) in the village.

I have investigated the current provision of singing groups in the local area, especially any connected with dementia and with older members of the community.

Age UK in canterbury subsidise a group called the Songbirds. There is also Skylarks, a group for those suffering from Parkinsons Disease.

'Sounds Beaney' is one of several activity groups held at the Beaney in Canterbury. I have been invited to join a session and talk to the leader, Leanne Macdonald. Although the group is open to anyone in the Canterbury area, she stressed that in reality it was for those who were able to get to the city centre independently.

I have contacted Roger Lithgow regarding his comments at the precious meeting "to network with organizations for dealing community needs including Positive Well-being issues to reduce isolation and loneliness with a view to connecting residents with community groups" and it is also my intention to speak with Linda Haines who set up the Hope Café.

This week I met with Pauline Louch, who approached me with this idea originally and who leads the Tuesday Singers at the church, to hear her ideas for the venture. She currently attends Hope Café with her husband. Hope Café has been running for a year and although their first anniversary was fairly well attended the usual number going on a Monday is very small. Councillor Mitchell has been taking people to the Café on the minibus and providing taped music, which those who attend enjoy.

Pauline's idea is to initially make the singing group a part of Hope Café. Her hope is that by advertising this on social media and in the Link Up magazine it might bring more people together so using the facility as a place to find companionship and provide an interest for people who are currently isolated. Her ultimate aim is to also extend the hours of Hope Café is to extend this into a 'warm space' during the Autumn and Winter months, making use of the new kitchen facilities so that it could be open longer, for example from 10:30 – 2:00pm.

I would like to ask Council if Pauline could come to the October meeting to talk about this and possibly make application for a grant to help with the purchase of a keyboard to enable this to happen.

189-24. To discuss what needs to be done in the dog walking area.

There was a good discussion on this item with the outcome that large metal signs are purchased and fixed securely to the gates. Wording to be agreed.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb and seconded by Cllr Hogben and all in agreement.

190-24 To discuss and agree on purchase of equipment for the Pay Back team.

It was decided that the list of equipment should be thinned out. A new quote to be obtained and brought back to the next meeting for approval.

191-24. To discuss and agree which quote is to be accepted for the playpark work. (106)

A vote was taken after review of the three quotes and the result was as follows.

Wicksteed 2 votes

Proludic 3 Votes

Playdale 0 Votes

Two Cllrs abstained.

The work then goes to Proludic.

Cllr Birch stated that he would bring quotes for the football goals to the next meeting

192-24. To agree the allocation of plots in the Cemetery for the Gurkha and Nepalese Community.

There was a short discussion, and it was agreed that the area be allotted.

Proposed by Cllr Taylor and Seconded by Cllr Birch and all in agreement

193-24. To Discuss and agree £1000 yearly donation to Broad Oak Village Hall.

Donation for Village Halls. A comment from me - I was expecting to see a resolution on how to fast track emergency funding for village halls as we voted not make the £1,000 donation in June and this decision must stand for the time being. The decision, in June, to fast-track emergency funding is probably better than simply donating £1,000 annually since it could be specific in terms of timing, funding amount and purpose. I have looked at our Financial Regulations and I'm afraid that the

delegated emergency spending provision for our clerk only applies to the provision of Parish Council Services so another mechanism will need to be agreed and written into the regulations.

There was a discussion on this item.

There was a suggestion that we have a budget item for emergency use for halls in the Parish in our next budget.

Broad Oak Village hall to apply for a grant at this time.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb and Seconded by Cllr Hogben and all in agreement.

194-24. To discuss and agree to get quotes for the first section of the management plan of Centenary Woodland.

It was proposed by Cllr Bubb and Seconded by Cllr Hogben and all in Agreement to get quotes for the first section of work.

195-24. To discuss helping in the community.

Cllr Hogben explain that there are lots of people in the community that are to need help in the future and he would like to use the Social Centre once a week to put on a lunch, tea and coffee and cake.

Cllr Taylor suggested that it be alternated between Sturry and Broad Oak

Cllr Betts

As a Parish Council one of our roles is to support local community. This is clearly best done when we either provide facilities and events for our community or liaise with existing groups and organisations.

Probably the oldest 'organisation' in Sturry Parish is St. Nicholas' Church and we sit literally 50 yards away from the building.

It would seem to me that there is a heart among the Councillors to seek ways to develop our involvement and support for the village, its groups and members of the community.

I spoke with our Clerk to check that it was permitted for me to approach the church and see if they would be interested in forming a closer liaison with the Parish Council and if there would be ways, we could better support them and to use their knowledge of the community in developing our own role.

I met with Revd Peter Freeman and his wife Jane, one of the church Wardens, last week and they were both very pleased to have the possibility of liaising more closely with the Council as had happened in the past.

Currently church based/led activities that outreach into the community are:

- Monday Crafty Allsorts
- Tuesday Sturry Singers led by Pauline Louch

- Wednesday coffee morning
- Soup on Saturday which takes place monthly in the autumn and winter months

The church will also be the venue for the new Bereavement support group which will meet once a month from November.

I was told that this year the church has decided to hold a café church style Harvest Festival service, and their gifts will go to Catching Lives.

They are planning to hold a Christmas Tree Festival where groups provide and decorate a tree – many of you will remember this being held in the past. It was suggested that the Parish Council might like to decorate a tree this year.

It was further suggested that, as the Parish council no longer produce our own village magazine, we would consider providing a page of information on a regular basis for the Link Up magazine.

Certainly, this would be another way of promoting the work of the Parish Council and the significant role we have in the community. Personally, I think that anything we as the Parish Council can do to support and work with the local church would be beneficial to both groups and support our desire to provide a positive experience for our community.

So, in summary, the church would be interested in discussing the possibility of co-ordinating the Christmas Tree Festival with the Parish Council's Christmas Lights event. They would also like to explore the possibility of the PC putting updates and information in the Link UP magazine.

Finally, I think it important to state that our involvement, if any, with the church is essentially non-evangelical, as I would like to think that we would be equally interested in developing supportive links with any faith groups in our community.

As an aside, I was asked to share with the meeting that the church has found any communications with the Parish Council over the past year to have been efficiently and professionally dealt with and that there is a confidence that any enquiries will be answered promptly. Revd Freeman has also received feedback from relatives needing to contact the Cemetery Superintendent and asked if I would publicly pass on thanks his thanks for the sympathetic way in which queries are dealt with and the time taken to help and support individuals.

Bring back to next meeting.

196-24. To discuss and agree on how to proceed with the purchase of the old Sturry Cricket Ground.

The clerk explained what is up for sale.

He also explained that there is a process to go through before the Council could actually purchase.

The decision was made to proceed.

Proposed by Cllr Bubb and Seconded Cllr Hogben and all in agreement.

Bring back to next meeting

Date for next meeting.

9th October 2024 at Broad Oak Village Hall

Meeting closed at 21:14