

## **RIVER PARISH COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

Held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7.30pm in River Methodist Church

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Taylor, Cllr. Brand, Cllr. Buhlman, Cllr. Horobin, Cllr. Mrs. Horobin, Cllr. Webb

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr. A. Denyer (Parish Clerk), Dist. Cllr. Beresford

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Cllr. Dixon, County Cllr. Lymer, PCSO White

### **2. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN**

The Chair was taken by Cllr. Brand who called for nominations for the position of Chairman. Cllr. Taylor was nominated by Cllr. Mr. Horobin and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Horobin. No other nominations were received. All agreed. Cllr. Taylor was duly elected Chairman for the forthcoming year and signed his declaration of office.

### **3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2015 had previously been circulated. It was proposed by Cllr. Brand and that the minutes be accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Mr. Horobin and all agreed.

### **4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Chairman called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chairman. Cllr. Buhlman nominated Cllr. Dixon. This was seconded by Cllr. Brand. No other nominations were received. All agreed and Cllr. Dixon was duly elected as Vice-Chairman for the forthcoming year.

### **5. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES 2015/2016**

Chairman read out the nominations for committees for the forthcoming year:

**Planning Committee** – Cllr. Taylor (Chairman), Cllr. Buhlman and Cllr. Webb

**Recreation Ground Management Committee** – Cllr. Dixon (Chairman), Cllr. Brand, Cllr. Mr. Horobin, Cllr. Mrs. Horobin, Cllr. Taylor

**Events Committee** – Cllr. Brand (Chairman), Cllr. Mr. Horobin, Cllr. Mrs. Horobin, Mrs. Bertelson, Mrs. Pierard, Mrs. Thomas, Mrs. Taylor

**River Dour Partnership** – Cllr. Webb

**Kent Association of Local Councils** - vacant

**Website** – Parish Clerk

**Tree Warden** – Cllr. Webb

Cllr. Taylor proposed that these nominations be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Buhlman and all agreed.

### **6. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS**

Clerk presented the statement of accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. Cllr. Brand proposed that the annual accounts and the annual governance statement be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Horobin and all agreed.

### **7. DATE FOR NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2015

The meeting was followed immediately afterwards by the Annual Parish Meeting

## **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Held on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2015 at 7.30pm in River Methodist Church

### **1. REPORT OF COUNCIL CHAIRMAN FOR 2014/2015**

Chairman gave his report on the last year. A copy is appended to these minutes.

### **2. PRESENTATION ON THE KEARSNEY PARKS INITIATIVE**

A presentation on the Dover District Council Kearsney Parks initiative was given by Jon Winder, the Project Manager.

The project is funded by the Parks for People fund via the Heritage Lottery Fund under the title of 'Mills to Mawson'. Usually only one site is included within the funding but on this occasion the Heritage Lottery Fund agreed to both Kearsney Abbey and Russell Gardens being included within the bid. Bushy Ruff was, therefore, not able to be included in the project. After the presentation, Mr. Winder answered questions from the floor as detailed in Item 5.

### **3. REPORTS**

#### **a) Kent County Council**

Cllr. Buhlman read a report from County Cllr. Lymer who was unable to attend due to another function.

During the early part of 2014 the Dover West area suffered some areas of bad flooding, in the Alkham, Tempe Ewell and Whitfield area. I spent several months engaging with KCC Highways to get drains/culverts cleared and or emptied, this solved some problem areas, but other areas such as Temple Ewell were harder to deal with due to the difficulty controlling the large water flows from further along the Valley at Alkham I have used part of my Member's fund to have road repairs carried out as a result of flood waters bubbling from underneath and breaking down the top tarmac dressing of parts of the Alkham Valley Road at Temple Ewell, by Kearnsey Abbey and Alkham between Newlands Meadow and the West side start of the 40 mph speed limit.

Foreign HGVs have been the source of many problems all around the Dover West area. However I must add it is not just the Dover West area. This is a major problem touching Dover, Ashford, Canterbury, Maidstone, Medway towns I am receiving reports that the problem is not only restricted to Kent but further afield such as Birmingham and yes, even Belgium and France, where they have large and numerous lorry parks. The main problems being overnight parking where many overseas HGV drivers from Eastern European countries do not spend their overnight parking expenses in order to subsidise their low wages. As a result they will park up overnight in nearby villages to the A2/A20 causing damage to verges, kerbstones or footpaths where they may drive partly onto them to park. They are considered to be the main culprits for littering by the verges. The other problematic area is the overseas HGV driver's blind reliance on satellite navigation systems that are intended for cars, they or their companies not being able to afford the more expensive systems produced specifically for HGVs, as a result relevant directional road signs are ignored causing foreign HGVs to take unsuitable routes. Working with KCC Highways I have arranged for additional signage to be erected in suitable areas in the hope of reducing these HGV incidents. However this is very expensive and eats into my Highway's Fund.

I have had two verge litter pickings carried out over the year with a third currently on going as I write. This is to pick litter from the central reservation and hard shoulder/verge area of the the A20/A2 and the M20/M2. However, I attribute as much blame to some of the local youth and also people of an age whom I would expect to have more responsibility in the way they should conduct their lives, to not throw fast food wrappings and other detritus from their car and vans. This irresponsibility ruins the touristic aspects of our county making us look

slovenly, is inordinately expensive and causes much inconvenience to clear up, by having to have night time carriageway closures and diversions, but as soon as the work is completed the roads are as filthy again. I am pushing to have much stricter enforcement of any form of littering, this includes pursuing offenders abroad where possible and practicable.

Earlier last year Kent County Council had submitted a proposal that an area at Whitfield White-cliffs commercial zone had potential for the construction of a lorry park. Whilst we need additional lorry parks, I feel they should be spread over the three motorways, M2, M20 and M25. I therefore fought against an additional lorry park at Whitfield on two counts, the first, we have lorry parks already at Dover Port, Whitfield and Lydden. The second reason, I was aware that some of these lorry park companies started out in life with their owners investing their life savings, eg Husks and Priority Freight. A fourth lorry park, so close by, could have threatened the other businesses risking job losses etc. As a result the idea of a fourth lorry park being at Whitfield was abandoned.

In 2013 many street lights were switched off after 23h00 in Kent, with a view to KCC achieving a required carbon saving, as required by EU regulations and a reduction of their electricity bill to the tune of over £1 million. However KCC has been researching a conversion to LED lighting for the whole County. LED will give KCC a massive annual saving on their electricity bill and a reduction in their carbon foot print, another advantage will be that lamp standards will be able to be controlled centrally as opposed to an engineer having to attend each standard, individually, should they wish to alter the timing of switch on/off. If one light fails there will be many more light diodes to give sufficient light, saving once more on the cost of not to have an engineer attend to change a bulb or tube. At night, because I have found as many people do not want lights on all night, as those who do, the LEDs can be set to dim after a certain time in the late evening, reducing the considerable amount of light pollution that we have had to endure now, especially around Whitfield over the last twenty years. KCC is now getting closer to having this type of lighting system installed across the county.

KCC has had to make heavy savings during the period of 2014/2015. In the period 2015/2016 KCC will be required to make further savings in excess of £200 million. one of the biggest areas of spend for KCC is Public Health, displaced children, asylum seeking children and mental health.

KCC should be receiving an apportioned additional central funding in order to continue with their programme of pothole repairs.

The next financial year is not going to be easy for the County, but thanks to the careful spending by those in charge of the many departments, savings have been made thereby keeping costs down where ever practical.

Obesity, alcohol related diseases and controlled drugs are a massive financial burden that Kent County Council has to pick up each year.

This could be achieved by reducing excessive consumption of alcohol and controlled drugs, to prevent ensuing ailments such as liver disease, or mental health issues through drugs, all a massive financial cost to Public Health services and Kent Police.

Many parents need to realise that their children actually need exercise for their mental and physical well being, yet we have some Mothers who attempt to park as close to a school as possible to collect or drop off their children, having driven them from as little as 300 metres to the school from home.

I have received complaints of Mothers parking in householder's driveways without permission or in one incident actually driving along a footpath to get closer to a school, because they

could not find a parking space closer. These mothers are actually contributing towards obesity in their children and a resultant burden on Public Health and National Health service. One in three children is now at risk of being obese, obesity leads onto diabetes which in turn leads to heart disease and the likelihood of not living so long. Diabetes costs KCC alone, in excess of £400 million per annum.

#### **b) PCSO Report**

A report was read out from the PCSO.

Crime: There have been three reports of shoplifting at the Co-Op store in the last month. The offenders for two of these have been identified. There has also been a theft of a vehicle - no suspect identified at this time. There was an assault in the grounds at Kearsney after a fight broke out between two youths.

Anti-social behaviour: There were reports of nuisance youths in Mill Race. Youths from Buckland were identified from photos taken by residents. Parents were spoken to and this has now been resolved. I have had complaints from residents about footballs being kicked into their gardens from the Recreation Ground (mainly from the play area where it is being kicked higher than normal from the swings). Then the youths are climbing into gardens of residents and being abusive when spoken to. I have been patrolling the area more regularly at the request of the Parish Council and have spoken to a few groups of youths that I have seen in the area.

#### **4. STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS OF THE COUNCIL FOR 2014/2015**

Clerk gave a presentation of the accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. A copy of the statement is appended to these minutes.

#### **5. QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR**

1) Park security: Mr. Winder said that previous experience had shown that designs of buildings or structures had to be robust.

2) Funding: the project funding is for five years. Part of the project is to ensure that the parks are financially sustainable.

3) Parking problems at peak times: The bid has included a commitment to encourage people to travel by public transport, on foot or by bicycle. 'Park and Ride' will also be investigated as an option. Any additional provision of parking spaces must be balanced against loss of landscape areas from the parks. The HLF is keen for the project to find new audiences for the park. Potentially, new events may be scheduled outside of existing periods of peak use (i.e. school holidays) to even out attendances at the parks.

4) Dog access: Mr. Winder confirmed that there are no plans to change the current arrangements. The rumours circulating have largely been due to mis-reporting of the new Dover District Council dog control orders.

Chairman thanked Jon Winder for his presentation.

Meeting closed at 9.05pm



## **CHAIRMAN'S JOTTINGS**

**30th April 2015**

*Clive Taylor, Chairman, River Parish Council*

Continuing our established custom these jottings are based upon my annual report given at the Annual Parish Meeting in May.

The month of April is usually full of surprises and this year has been no exception. I'm sure that the fine weather this month will have prompted fond memories of the late Fred Thomas who would have been able to offer accurate comments. Hundreds of people flocked to Kearsney Abbey during the school holiday. On occasions the car parking facilities were stretched to the limit and regrettably spilled over onto nearby roads causing inconvenience even causing some disruption to local bus services.

### **River Country Fayre**

Despite some unhelpful weather the expected crowds turned out last July and I am pleased to report that this annual event at the Recreation Ground once again proved to be as popular as ever. This year looks to be even better!

I would like to pay special tribute to our Events Committee and their many helpers who put in so much time in planning as well as on the day itself.

### **Scarecrow Trail**

This bi-annual event took place over the weekend of 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> September. This was very well supported and it was wonderful to see so many families taking part.

### **Wine and Wisdom Evening**

Our second annual quiz evening held at the Village Hall in October attracted a full house and I would specially like to thank all those who supported this event. Proceeds from all events arranged by the Parish Council enable us to invite village organisations to apply for grants towards the cost of any projects or schemes.

### **Remembrance Sunday**

During the annual service held at the Parish Church in November representatives from village organisations placed wreaths at the war memorial. Once again the weather conditions were kind to us all on this special occasion.

### **Pharmacy and Post Office**

Following the closure of Coxhill Stores and the local post office last July our new Pharmacy opened in November followed by the re-opening of the Post Office in February this year. Both seem to be proving very popular with the longer opening hours especially welcome.

### **Kearsney Parks Project**

Following the announcement about this by Dover DC last July various surveys and consultation with local organisations have been taking place. Your Parish Council have been actively involved and I will continue to endeavour to keep you informed of all future developments.

Arrangements have been made for Jon Winder, Kearsney Abbey Project Manager, to address our Annual Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> May. We are all looking forward to this and Jon has also agreed to answer any questions from the floor as well.

### **1917 Tram Accident**

A short ceremony took place in January this year to commemorate the worst tram accident in Britain that occurred on 19<sup>th</sup> August 1917. The Dover Society erected a blue plaque - the first outside the town - at the entrance of Mill Race.

### **Recreation Ground**

During the year a basket-ball hoop and table-tennis table have been installed. Further additional facilities and improvements are also planned in future.

Some of you may also have noticed the additional trees that have been planted along the Lewisham Road boundary.

Amongst other things plans for this year include the external redecoration of the clubhouse and some tree maintenance work.

### **Local Roads**

Many reports have been received about heavy lorries straying into the village, some parking overnight. Our District and County Councillors have been very active in addressing this and it is hoped that some new signage to be erected at the junction of Crabble Road and Crabble Avenue will prove effective in addressing this problem.

Additional arrangements are also planned to address problem parking in Common Lane particularly during school hours. However local residents and visitors will be able to continue to park there at all other times and should not therefore be affected

It is understood that the trees growing out of the wall beside the river between the entrance to Kingston Close and Crabble Road are to be removed shortly. Good news.

### **River in Bloom**

This initiative is gathering pace and it is hoped that flowering shrubs and flowers to provide more colour will soon be noticeable at a number of areas in the village.

### **Parish Meetings**

Your Parish Council meets at the Methodist Church in Lewisham Road on the second Tuesday each month except August and December. If you have something that you would like to raise why not come along to one of our Meetings? You will receive a warm welcome and we may be able to help. Details of our Meetings are placed on the notice board outside the Village Hall in Common Lane.

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Finally may I thank all my fellow councillors and our clerk for their continuing efforts as well as our contractors who maintain the recreation ground throughout the year.

Please keep up to date by visiting either our new Facebook page or our website [www.riverparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.riverparishcouncil.org.uk)