

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF RIVER PARISH COUNCIL

Held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 14th March 2023 at River Methodist Church

PRESENT: Cllr. Taylor (in the Chair), Cllr. Dixon, Cllr. Beresford, Cllr. Gunzi, Cllr. Jones, Cllr. Innes, Cllr. Wright

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr. A. Denyer (Parish Clerk). Dist. Cllr. Beaney, County Cllr. Richardson and one member of the public.

30. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

County Cllr Collor, Cllr. Atkins

31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 40: Cllr. Gunzi declared an interest as a Landowner and holder of Riparian rights.

32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 14th February 2023 had previously been circulated. Cllr, Dixon proposed that the minutes represented a true record of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. Beresford and all agreed.

33. UPDATES FROM THE MINUTES

Item 21a Parking on Lower Road: Cllr. Dixon asked if Sue Bralee had received a response. Clerk is still to action.

Item 24e Sport England correspondence: No response received from Sport England regarding the planning permissions at the Recreation Ground to an email sent by Dist. Cllr. Beaney.

34. REPORTS

a) PCSO/Policing

No report received.

Cllr. Gunzi reported that vandalism can now be reported directly to PCC. Details were passed to the Clerk.

b) District and County Councillors

County Cllr. Richardson reported:

i) (with reference to Item 34a) PCSOs have been decreased in the District from 18 to 6. However, more Police Officers have been recruited so overall numbers are up. He suggested that a request be made to the local Superintendent for a PCSO/Police Officer to attend approximately every 6 months.

ii) There is an initiative to bring unused buildings back into use has seen 2,500 across Kent including one recently in Dover.

iii) The current Community Services Consultation is about consolidating buildings not cutting services. Redundant building can then be sold.

iv) Adult Social Care Charges are currently subject to consultation.

v) There is also a review of children's SEN transport due to the high cost to KCC.

Dist. Cllr. Beaney reported:

i) Nominations are open for Local Heroes Awards (details on the DDC website)

ii) The Great British Spring Clean at Kearsney Abbey this month.

iii) There is a Litter Lotto App with rewards for people putting litter in a bin.

iv) The DDC budget has been agreed - the DDC element is the lowest rate in Kent.

v) A Community Roots Van is now available for events/locations, touring the District giving out information and providing access to online services.

vi) An £18 million grant has been received from the Levelling Up Fund for the Bench Street Redevelopment.

vii) It was noted that the Silver Screen Cinema is closing because there is no one to run it.

Dist. Cllr. Beaney and County Cllr. Richardson left the meeting at this point.

c) Parish Councillors

No reports.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

a) Mrs Nicholas asked for assistance to stop illegal parking in River especially in the Chilton Way area. Cllr. Dixon and Dist. Cllr. Beaney have also received an email from Mrs Nicholas. The Parish Council will assist if it can. It was pointed out that if any vehicles, even commercial vehicles, are taxed and legally parked, not causing an obstruction, there is nothing that can be done.

b) Query about misuse of the electric vehicle charging bays in Lewisham Road. Where can visitors go when the EV charging points are covered by conventional vehicles. Cllr. Gunzi pointed out that the Royal Oak pub also has a charging point. There is nothing that the Parish Council can do, directly. There are not enough EV charging points available and enforcement is a problem. Advice given was to report any incidents to DDC. Clerk was asked to provide the parishioner with reporting details.

A second query has been received on the same subject also complaining about vehicles parking across the dropped kerb at the Lewisham Road bus terminus making access to the bus stop difficult for anyone with mobility problems.

36. PLANNING MATTERS

a) Any Planning Applications with expiry dates before the next meeting

i) DOV/23/00228 | Erection of two storey side extension (garage demolished) | 21 Hawthorne Close, River, Kent CT17 0NG. - No comments.

b) Decisions made by Dover District Council

None.

37. FINANCIAL MATTERS

a) Financial Reports for February 2023

Financial reports for February had previously been circulated. Report was accepted.

b) Request for Support from Kent Air Ambulance

A request has been received for financial support towards the cost of the Kent Air Ambulance. Chairman proposed £500 be donated. This was seconded by Cllr. Dixon and all agreed

c) Request to purchase replacement printer for the Parish Office

Clerk reported that the current printer is now faulty, having provided four years service. A similar volume replacement office printer would cost in the region of £200. It was agreed that the Clerk purchase a new printer.

38. RECREATION GROUND MATTERS

Cllr. Dixon reported that:

a) There have been problems with some residents of Crabble Court against the Cafe development. Cllr. Beresford has obtained a copy of Land Registry. It confirmed that the Parish Council has right of access and part of courtyard is owned by the Parish Council. Clerk requested to write to all residents explaining the position.

b) John Hill is progressing with the Cafe development but has been held up by wet weather. The new windows and doors have arrived.

c) There have been recent problems with flytipping. Also domestic rubbish being disposed of both in Recreation Ground waste bins and the Veolia bin.

d) He has met with Chairman of Dover Rangers Colts F.C. The Football Federation want to see agreement with Parish Council before progressing with funding to help with the cost of lining, pitch preparation and improvement. It was suggest that a letter of intent be sent along with copy of agreements with Tennis Club and the Bowls Club. There has been a problem with the disposal of grass cuttings but a skip has been provided by Dist. Cllr. Beaney and will be emptied every few weeks at a low cost.

e) Still no response from Sport England regarding the two planning applications in the Recreation Ground. Cllrs Dixon and Beresford are attempting further contact and will keep Councillors informed of progress.

f) Small area of Play Area Surfacing is to be repaired this month. This will complete the works on both Play Areas with all equipment up to specifications.

g) New dog signs are going up at the Recreation Ground.

39. LOWER ROAD PHONE BOX RESTORATION

Cllr. Gunzi reported that two contractors are ready to start and are liaising with him. A notice is needed to go up informing residents that the library books will be removed during the works. Clerk to action and send Cllr. Gunzi a notice. Vandalism on the books is increasing at night. Neighbours have offered, voluntarily, to lock up at night. It was agreed to add a lock to the works to enable this.

Estimated cost is now £1,640 (to include glass replacement rather than polycarbonate sheeting) plus the cost of the lock. Original budget was £1,500. It was agreed to go ahead with the refurbishment including re-glazing with glass.

40. RIVER DOUR PROJECT

Cllr. Innes is to have a meeting with White Cliffs Countryside Partnership to sort out the logistics of transporting weed from other locations along the Dour and is in touch with the Police Cadet volunteers. Cllr. Gunzi asked about consultation with landowners as in the original proposal. He is a landowner and would like to see consultation and a planting plan. Cllr. Innes said this will only be a small project and the main object is to create working relationships with the relevant organisations. The weed needs a gravel bed, decent flow rate and sunlight to flourish. It will not grow on silt. He will work with WCCP to create a plan. Cllr. Gunzi also asked for reassurance on the protection of nesting sites. Cllr. Wright said that all properties affected on the river should be informed. The Environment Agency have given approval for weed to be moved from one location to another. A discussion on the promotion of the plan took place.

41. SPEAKER FOR THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

It was acknowledged that previous low attendance at Annual General Meetings was a problem with regard to attracting a speaker. Cllr. Innes is happy to stand in as a reserve, to talk about the River Dour project, if no other speaker is available.

42. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

a) Letter of Resignation from Cllr. Underhill

It was reported that a letter of resignation has been received from Tina Underhill.

b) Rotary Club Open Day

An invitation has been received to an Open Day on 16th March at the Holiday Inn, Whitfield to see the work done by the Rotary Club.

43. ANY ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

Both Councillors Dixon and Gunzi said that the recently introduced Lower Road 20mph Zone has inadequate signage. There is no signage in Common Lane. Also, signage is needed in the road outside Co-op plus something between Royal Oak and the bridge opposite Riverdale. Both road marking and additional signposts. Clerk was asked to request additional signage from Kent Highways with the expectation that there will be no additional charge.

Meeting ended at 9.10pm