

**Minutes** of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Present: Cllrs: K Howard-Challis (Chair); T Portman; A Groves; A Smith; P Lawrence and Mrs A I Smith (Clerk)

In attendance: 9 Members of the public and Cllr Baldock

1. To receive **Apologies for absence**.  
Cllr Szabo.
2. To receive any **Declarations of Pecuniary or Non Pecuniary Interest**, and any Applications for Dispensation on Agenda Items. (Requirement of the Localism Act 2011.)  
Cllr Smith declared an interest in item 7a.
3. **Public session**  
It was raised that a notification from KCC about a road closure on 31<sup>st</sup> January was actually dated 31<sup>st</sup> January and why would they send it out on the same day of the closure.
4. **Visitors**. Reports or comments from:
  - a) KCC and Swale BC Cllr Mike Baldock shares the frustration regarding communication regarding the roadworks. The big news are budgets and Local Government re-organisation. East of Kent is disparate as there are many small towns and lots of villages and not one large town or City with the villages around it. There may be a Mayor for the whole of Kent. The decision regarding elections will be known by the end of the week. The loneliness project is getting good traction, there should be more awareness next month, and some events planned.
  - b) SBC Councillor  
None
  - c) Police Officer  
None
  - d) Friends of the Brickfields  
None.
5. **To resolve the Minutes**
  - a) It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2025 are a correct record and were signed accordingly.
6. **To discuss any planning applications received between producing the agenda and this meeting.**  
There was none.
7. **Correspondence**
  - a) An email together with a revised plan was received from KCC Public Rights of Way and Access Service regarding the second consultation on the proposal to divert Public Footpath ZR39 under section 119 of the Highways Act 1908 to a new route wholly within the land ownership of the applicant at Home Farm, Lower Halstow. Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to support the diversion, seconded by Cllr Groves and agreed by majority. Cllr Smith did not vote.
8. **Finance**
  - a) Review of pay for the Street Cleaner. It was proposed by Cllr Portman to increase £1.00 per hour above the minimum wage to start immediately. The proposal was seconded by Cllr Smith. Agreed unanimously.
  - b) Request received to cover the costs to print the Village News. Cllr Howard-Challis proposed to donate £800.00, seconded by Cllr Portman. Agreed unanimously.
  - c) **To receive reports on the following:**
    - a) **Parks & Leisure and Planning**  
No report
    - b) **Footpaths and Burial Ground**  
Cllr Portman is concerned about the crack in the bridge over the sluice in Church Path. It was previously established that the Environment Agency do not have responsibility for the bridge and the crack was reported last year to KCC Highways. Cllr Portman will

supply photos over a period of time to record how the crack changes. Signs have been put on the bins at the Burial Ground to clarify what items are recycled.

c) **Hedgerow Maintenance**

There is no cause for concern currently. Cllr Lawrence raised the subject of whether shredded bark on the footpath between Green Farm House and the Old Post Office was a good idea or not. Opinion was divided.

d) **Allotments**

There is still a problem with the tap at the Memorial Hall Site allotments. The water has been turned off in the road. It was decided to leave the water turned off during the winter period. The tap at Westfield is fine. The contractor will be given the go ahead to clear the overgrown allotments.

e) **Parish Highways Plan**

The roundels in the tarmac and the incorrect 30 mph signs have been changed where requested to 20 mph. However, the small 20 mph signs have remained. The MP wanted to know if the Parish Council has, any questions that they want raised, regarding the last letter from Kent Highways. It was asked why there could not be a buffer zone of 40 mph in Breach Lane before the 20mph limit as the busiest lane in the village and on a bus route. It was discussed that Lower Halstow Parish Council requested a 20 mph zone and not a limit, which was the same scheme in Newington. The 20 mph zone extends down Wardwell Lane and should therefore join with that in Lower Halstow. Cllr Baldock will check as to why it is a limit and not a zone. A copy of a recently received itemised bill was supplied to Cllr Baldock. There were 20 mph signs and 30 mph marked on the road together at the bottom of Chapel Hill that were left like that for a year with no apology. The Clerk will ask the questions regarding the buffer zone in Breach Lane; for an apology regarding the conflicting speed limit signs and for a conclusion from the MP.

f) **Brickfields and Seawall**

The Friends met two weeks ago. After payments for the bund, and some tree felling their balance is £3464.48. They may request some financial support from the Parish Council towards some signage. The AGM will be on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2025 possibly to be held on the Edith May Barge. The next work party is on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

d) **Clerk's Report**

Payments received during December totalled £826.78. These were the payments from the barges.

In respect of the littering at Westfield Car Park, Mr Tidy informed the Council that he walks every road in the village every week and that the car park had been checked on the Monday. At that time, there had been no excessive littering.

I was unable to report the bent road signs at Church Path and The Street, by the bus stop on the Swale Borough Council website and asked Cllr Chapman if he would be able to assist in the matter. To date I have not received a reply.

I sent an email to Mr Gransden regarding the damage at the Dock and he replied to say that he would get it repaired.

I have asked for an update from Bridger's Law regarding the purchase of the land at the Brickfields but not received a reply yet.

The grounds maintenance contractor has dealt with a fallen tree in the Brickfields and cut back a tree in the Memorial Wood backing onto Heron Close.

The problem with the tap in the Memorial Hall site allotments is ongoing. At my request, a resident kindly turned the water off in the road, as the tap was gushing water. The plumber has been contacted once again.

The removal of the hedge in the field adjacent to the pumping station has been reported to Swale Borough Planning Enforcement, as this is in a conservation area and no permission could be found on the portal.

The bank balance as of 31st January 2025 is: £74,795.73

**e) Items for information only:**

- a) Items for Website and Village News  
To advertise the vacant allotments
  - b) To receive agenda items for the next meeting:  
None
- The meeting closed at: 19.54

**Date of next meeting:** Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025

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Payments February 2025

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	1005.50		511649475
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	183.04		227128057
Intelligent Facility Services Ltd	CCTV SIM Service Invoice: 10593	30.00	5.00	803491598
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hall Hire Invoice: 1013844	22.50		762816376
DCK Accounting Solutions	Payroll Services for January 2025 Invoice: 25123	36.00	6.00	836388804
R H Parker	Allotment Tap Invoice: 1260	102.00	17.00	809854462
JRB Enterprise Ltd	Dog Waste Bags Invoice: 27978	133.86	22.31	199447576
Cllr Howard-Challis	Attendance at various meetings – Mileage @ 0.45p per mile.	35.10		427494982

**Lloyds Multipay:**

Bank Charge

£3.00

**Total**

**£3.00**

**Standing Order 1<sup>st</sup> of the month** Crescent Digital Marketing

£25.00

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis  
Chair**