

Minutes of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 1st October 2024.

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

In attendance: 3 Members of the public:

1. To receive **Apologies for absence.**

Cllr Portman and PC Phil Clemens (received after the meeting)

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.)
None.

3. **Public session**

An enquiry was made regarding the land in Wardwell lane that has been served an Enforcement Notice from Swale Borough Council. The Chair confirmed that the enforcement notice expires in approximately two weeks' time. Any information received will be posted to the Parish council website.

It was raised that some other villages put Parish Council Minutes and other information in the local newsletter, instead of only on the internet. The Village News is not run by the Parish Council, so permission would need to be sought at a time when they have just announced that fewer pages would be printed. It was also discussed that the Minutes could be printed and placed on the noticeboard.

There was concern about the request for permission regarding "Mudlarking" on the beach.

4. **Visitors.** Reports or comments from:

a) KCC Councillor

None

b) SBC Councillor

None

c) Police Officer –Newsletter from PC Phil Clemens:

What's going on in your area

I'd like to firstly apologise for my lack of visible policing in the last couple of months. An injury currently prevents me from being able to engage with not only the residents of Lower Halstow but to the other areas, I am responsible for as well. Rest assured as soon as I am able to, I will resume my duties as normal and provide a first class service
The Swale Beat Team has had an uplift recently of fantastic officers who are eagerly looking to get involved in their communities as soon as possible. Whilst I am office-bound if there are urgent enquiries that need looking into please do not be discouraged into not informing me; I will look for my colleagues for assistance in the meantime.

Local Stories

I have been pleased to see there have been no reports of drivers travelling at excessive speeds through 20MPH limit that encompasses Lower Halstow. My hope is that this is a continuing trend.

In the last two months I have seen two reports of poaching occurring within Lower Halstow, and not at the Brickfields as has been an historic trend. I was asked if I could deliver a talk with regards to Poaching, covering its definitions, governing laws and powers and policies to Police as well as the public. I had created a resource that I plan to disseminate as soon as I am able which may be useful.

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 3rd September 2024 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. Matters Arising

- a) The report came back from the playground inspection, which was much as before regarding regular maintenance. It is now beginning to show its age and disappointingly, the games table is bowed. It was agreed to keep it tidy and maintained.

8. Finance

- a) It was agreed to buy the new pads for the defibrillator and to get a new service done.

Action: Clerk

- b) It was agreed to defer the decision regarding the purchase of a gov.uk domain name for the website until the Clerk has attended an online information session with the Central Digital and Data Office.

9. Correspondence:

- a) Email regarding trees overhanging a property in Heron Close. The trees in question appear to be on private land and not the Memorial Wood. The Clerk will reply that the neighbours should be approached.

Action: Clerk

- b) Request to pick up sherds of pottery from the Beach from a holder of a Port of London Thames Foreshore permit. It was agreed to decline the request.

10. To receive reports on the following:

a) Parks & Leisure and Planning

As above (item 7). It has been noted that there has been an increase in littering.

b) Footpaths and Burial Ground

Report supplied by Cllr Portman:

Last month, I met with a local resident at the burial ground to assist in identifying a missing grave. Since then, a new headstone has been laid to rest.

Some of the overhanging foliage on the perimeter fence has been trimmed and tidied up. The burial grounds bins continue to be collected.

Brickfields and Sea Wall.

In August it was reported that a rough sleeper was camping at the brickfield.

I met with the camper to discuss her situation and to see how to support her moving on after it became apparent that she was very vulnerable. Several members of the community and church have been assisting her with food and clothing as well as offering support. When she had not moved on after a couple of days, I asked our local police to visit her and they did, accompanied by a member of the Rough Sleeper team. I have since spoken to the team and they advised they are looking for accommodation for her but this is compounded by her having a pet. However, the team are continuing to explore all options but advised that this could take time.

This is a difficult situation for everyone concerned. One worry for me is that with winter coming our rough sleeper will be exposed to the cold and could be tempted to keep warm by lighting a fire. The area that she is camping in is surrounded by some dense shrubs and trees and this brings an added risk to the situation, not only to her but to the neighbouring properties.

The police have advised that a court order would be required if there were any attempt to move our rough sleeper on but they are in favour of seeing what accommodation the Rough Sleeper team can come up with as they say our rough sleeper is willing to accept support.

c) Hedgerow Maintenance

All is good currently.

d) Allotments

Awaiting a quote regarding the clearances of the untenanted allotments. It was noted that a vehicle was driven across the allotments in School Lane. The tenant has received a full apology from the contractors concerned. They are going to clear some debris in reparation.

e) Parish Highways Plan

Nothing has changed since the last meeting. The Clerk will contact Highways.

Action: Clerk

11. Clerk's Report

Payments received during August totalled £20,558.28. This included the Precept from Swale Borough Council of £19120.00, £110.78 from the barges, £100 for car parking spaces at Westfield Car Park and £227.50 allotment rents.

I am continuing to add items to the new website, but this is ongoing and I have some catching up to do as regards the finance documents from the audit, before I can close down the HugoFox website. I will also be attending an online course as regards the gov.uk domain name for the new website.

The bank balance as of 30th September 2024 is: £78,299.90

12. Items for information only:

- a) Items for Website and Village News: Item about allotments.
None
- b) To receive agenda items for the next meeting – None.
The meeting closed at 19.43 hours

Date of next meeting: 5th November 2024

Payments October 2024

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	968.21		113909660
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning			366316273
Intelligent Facility Services Ltd	CCTV SIM Service Invoice:	30.00	5.00	398848566
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Services Invoice: 24688	36.00	6.00	651613590
Crescent Digital Marketing	Monthly fee Website management: October 2024	25.00		40328165
Bridger's Law	Solicitor Fees for Purchase of Land at Brickfields. (On account.)	300.00		631428766
KALC	Councillor Training: Invoice: 9343014829 Plus 15p underpayment for VAT on invoice: 9163	60.15	10.15	824630885
HMRC	PAYE Tax July to Sept 2024	823.99		476012341
Lower Halstow Parochial Church Council (Village News)	Donation towards printing costs	150.00		418121652
Gallagher	AJG Community Schemes Insurance Policy Invoice: 537225492	1533.63		168684654

Lloyds Multipay DD 10/10/24

£3.00

Unity Trust Bank Charges: 30/9/24

£18.00

Standing Order Crescent Digital Marketing

£25.00 per month starting: 1/11/24

Date:**Signed:**

Cllr. K Howard-Challis
Chair