

**Minutes** of the Monthly Council Meeting of Lower Halstow Parish Council held in the Memorial Hall at 7.00 pm on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2024.

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

In attendance: Members of the public: 4 and Cllr Baldock (KCC)

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

PC Phil Clemens and 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.)  
None.

3. **Public session**

A request was made for a cupboard to store archive material for the village. There are amongst other papers, scrapbooks with news cuttings that had any connection to Lower Halstow. This will be discussed with the Village Hall Committee. It was also suggested that this would ideal material to be digitised for the new Parish Council website.

Last week there were road closures on Basser Hill for work on the drainage system. This has raised the awareness that this is a primary route for Lower Halstow residents and it appears that KCC are interested in facilitating to make it safer, maintained and looked after. The Parish Council were in agreement for Mr McGee to carry on the discussions with KCC regarding making Basser Hill a safer route to and from the Village.

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

a) KCC Councillors;

In respect of drains that were inherited by KCC from the District Councils around 2004/05, the whereabouts of only about 75% drains were known. If photographs could be taken and reported in directly to KCC they can put it on their records.

There are still a few problems with the waste bin contract including ongoing problems with the Wardwell Lane route. New rounds have been agreed as the old rounds are not working. The crews will be doing the same rounds with each colour bin so that they are familiar with particular rounds. Keep reporting online directly to Suez.

Cllr Baldock is involved with getting a socialisation strategy rolled out to combat loneliness. Parishes have a big role to play including "Chat" benches. If you sit on these benches, you are open to someone coming along and then chatting together. It can only be done where there is more than one bench, so that one of them is designated as a "Chat" bench where a plaque could be placed to explain and where to get help.

b) SBC Councillor

None;

c) Police Officer

No report.

d) Friends of the Brickfields

Cllr Portman met with the Friends of the Brickfields and sadly one of the supporting volunteers. Dr Alan Beattie has left the village and he will be missed but wish him well for the future. Quote are being sought to cut a Bund wall and updates are awaited. There were reports of a fire on the Brickfields.

5. **To resolve the Minutes**

a) It was resolved that the Minutes of the Monthly Parish meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 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. **Finance**

a) It was agreed to add two extra cuts for the Recreation ground and Gibbs Amenity area and to add them to a future contract.

**Action: Clerk**

- b) A quote has been received for clearance of allotments and weed control at Westfield car park. Another quote is still being sought.
- c) It was agreed to make a donation to the Village News towards the printing costs of £150.00  
**Action: Clerk**
- d) A quote for Heron Close, Brickfields entrance has been sought for a more compact sign, which is £353.24. Cllr Baldock is willing to pay for this through the KCC members grant scheme. Cllr Portman will contact the supplier to add a QR code for the sign to connect to the Parish Council website. It was discussed that a further sign is required at the reed bed entrance to the Brickfields.
- e) Replacement of new pads for Defibrillator at Three Tuns after deployment. Deferred to the next meeting.
- f) Playground upgrade. Deferred to the next meeting.
- g) New grass strimmer. Cllr Portman needs to do some more research; this item is deferred to the November meeting.
- h) Replacing benches in The Street. These benches are very old and very low. However, they are not on the Parish Council Asset Register. They were probably put there by Swale Borough Council. The Clerk will look into whether Swale Borough Council would be willing to either replace or repair them.

**Action: Clerk**

#### 8. Correspondence

- a) Regarding upkeep and responsibility of the alleyways between various roads in Lower Halstow. They are not registered as a Public Right of Way. If the Parish Council can establish that these alleyways have been used over a number of years as a public right of way it is possible that they still be registered as such.  
**Action: Clerk**
- b) It was agreed that the Parish Council would give a £50 donation to the Scarecrow Trail run to raise money for Lower Halstow Primary School.  
**Action: Clerk**
- c) It was agreed to ask the Parish Council contractor if he could trim some of the growth on the boundary between the Gibbs amenity area and the Old Mill.  
**Action: Clerk**

**Action: Clerk**

#### 9. To receive reports on the following:

##### a) Parks & Leisure and Planning

No report.

##### b) Footpaths and Burial Ground

Cllr Portman met with Jenni Watson from Highways regarding the request to put bollards at the junction of Cumberland Drive and School. Cllr Portman was told that the bollards are very expensive and that the pavements are too narrow. Ms Watson was unable to give an answer regarding as to why the surrounding villages with smaller pavements have bollards. Double yellow lines were suggested, but this needs to be policed. The School and the Police are supportive in trying to stop the inconsiderate parking. A wonky sign has been reported at Church Path. There was a serious water leak in School Lane, which is now repaired.

##### c) Hedgerow Maintenance

Cllr Lawrence reported that a month ago, there were some overgrown hedges but the situation has now improved. One or two pavements are being obstructed by overgrown gardens. It was also reported that the hedge along Sheerness Road and into the junction with Vicarage Lane is protruding into the road. A letter will be sent to the landowner..

**Action: Clerk**

##### d) Allotments

An item was put in the Village News to say that a few allotments are available. There was quite a lot interest. Four and half plots have now been taken over. There are still some available, these are all overgrown. Contractors have been contacted regarding

getting quotes to clear these. The item will be repeated for the Village News and the new website.

**Action: Clerk**

e) **Parish Highways Plan**

30 mph road marking is still in the road where it should be 20 mph. Cllr Smith has tried to explain that the 20 mph signs are mandatory but it appears that it is being seen as advisory. Another Highways Improvement Plan meeting will be requested and Cllr Baldock will be kept informed.

f) **Brickfields and Seawall**

No report.

**10. Clerk's Report**

Payments received during August totalled £1019.06. These were the payments from the two barges, car parking spaces at Westfield Car Park, allotment rent and one payment of £24.27, which is from an unknown source currently.

The external audit has been completed and the statement has been posted to the Hugofox website, as the new website is not yet live. There were comments on minor scope for improvement for the next financial year and there were points regarding email management. These have been circulated to the councillors.

The invoices have been sent out for the allotments, mostly by email and a few by post where the residents do not use the internet. As reported above some payments have been received.

Permission has been given to lay a memorial stone on a grave in the Burial Ground where there was not one before.

The bank balance as of 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 is £60,703.43

**11. Items for information only:**

- a) Items for Website and Village News: Item about allotments.
- b) To receive agenda items for the next meeting – A large tree at eastern end of Gibbs Amenity needs attention.

The meeting closed at: 8.00pm

**Date of next meeting:** 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024.

Payments September 2024

Payee	Description	Gross Amount £	VAT £	Cheque No/Bank Payment
Mrs A I Smith	Clerk's Expenses and Salary	968.41		129400146
Mr M Tidy	Village Cleaning	137.28		913597012
Intelligent Facility Services Ltd	CCTV SIM Service Invoice:	30.00	5.00	49958412
Lower Halstow Memorial Hall Trust	Hall Hire July 2024 Invoice: 1013810	22.50		524673338
DCK Payroll Solutions	Payroll Services Invoice: 24551	36.00	6.00	902085933
ATS	Bases and fixing of benches to Recreation Ground and Gibbs Amenity Area Invoice 7/8/24	750.00		Cheque 300035
Crescent Digital Marketing	Final balance Website Redesign Invoice LHPC01	693.00		748516174
Crescent Digital Marketing	Monthly fee Website management – September Invoice LHPC02	25.00		97456607 (set up as standing order to go out monthly on 1 <sup>st</sup> of the month)
Tina Portman	Re-imbursement expenses Various items	70.92		888259314

Lloyds Multipay DD 10/09/24      £ 210.70 (statement provided)

**Date:**

**Signed:**

**Cllr. K Howard-Challis  
Chair**