**Challock Parish Council Virtual Minutes**

Memorial Hall, Audrey Allen room

Thursday, 15th April 2021, 7.31 pm

Members of public present: 6

Apologies

Vice Chair Russell Jaques & ABC Downs West Ward Councillor Larry Krause

Present

Michael Fisher (Chairman), Tracy Brown, Anthony Aitken, Duncan Hardie, John Ramsden, Max Thomas & Di Sandy (Clerk).

Welcome

Chairman Fisher thanked everyone for attending.

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Michael Fisher, Max Thomas, Tony Aitken, Tracy Brown, Duncan Hardie and John Ramsden had no new changes to the declarations of interest.

Duke of Edinburgh

At the sad passing of HRH Duke of Edinburgh, the Parish Council wishes to pass on their condolences to the Her Majesty The Queen and the Royal family. Parishioners can visit the official Royal website where an on-line condolence book has been created www.royal.uk. There may be number of parishioners that may not have access to the internet to submit an on-line tribute, therefore KCC invite people to send in their tributes by post c/o The Civic Office at Sessions House. Who would input the messages on behalf of the member of public. Clerk has telephoned a number of parishioners in the village to offer to input on-line message on their behalf.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of 18th March 2021 meeting were signed by Chairman Fisher as an accurate record.

Approved by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Aitken.

All agreed.

PC Luke Jones Report for March

There were 2 reported crimes of note including theft of motor vehicle and burglary.

Although there have been no catalytic convertors reported stolen in the area this month, there have been several reported in other parts of Ashford. Please remain vigilant for any suspicious behaviour.

Clerk’s Report

**Highways**

Reported multiple potholes along White Hill, Kingswood.

Reported damaged telegraph pole that has not been removed. A new one has been placed in front of the old one but is causing visibility problems when exiting from Green Lane, junction onto Canterbury Road.

**ABC**

Clerk has reported the amount of rubbish along Faversham Road, Kings Wood and White Hill, Kingswood to ABC. Clare Norman from ABC will put in a request to Biffa who schedules high speed road clearance for the A251 and White Hill. As these roads area national speed limit, we cannot organize a litter pick ourselves.

**Public Rights of Way**

Clerk currently making enquiries in purchasing footpath signs for wooded area, the Lees, Beech Court Gardens.

**The Lees**

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Grounds man filled potholes on Lees tracks and entrance opposite Help Hire.

Grounds man cleared out the drain at the village stores.

Grounds man has scarified and rotovated the wildflower area 5.

The Rewilding Project group has remarked the areas and assisted the primary school children in planting the wildflower seeds.

**Welcome to Challock Leaflet**

Clerk has collected 30 copies of Welcome to Challock leaflet.

**Play Park**

Weekly sanitization of play park equipment and refill hand sanitizer pump is continuing for the time being.

**Training**

Clerk to attend a 4-hour online litter pick training course on 26th April 2021. ABC are aiming at making litter picks more accountable in the future. This course will provide the skills and knowledge to organize, promote, and deliver a successful litter pick or clean up event. Parish Councils are being given their own supply of litter picking equipment. Clerk to organize a village litter pick after attending the training. Current status on litter picks, small groups of no more than 6 can do litter picking or we can loan out the equipment to parishioners who wish to carry out a litter pick.

Correspondence

* Received telephone call from parishioner re bollards on the Lees and to be aware of narrow lees track and residents being blocked in with oil deliveries etc.
* Received notices of Election for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent County Council elections. Clerk has displayed these on the notice boards.
* Received confirmation of completion of registration from the Land Registry concerning Deeds of easements for plots 1,2 & 5 Lilybuds properties.
* Received an email from PKF Littlejohn concerning 2020/21 AGAR external auditor instructions. The submission deadline is 2nd July 2021.
* Received an email from ECO Green Communities regarding a new litter station, to encourage people to pick up their litter when they have forgotten a bag to collect it. Both stations are intended to give people a nudge to do the right thing. By providing 100% compostable bags in our dog waste stations and recycled bags in our litter stations. As part of the project, we work with a Carbon Off-Set to provide trees for every station we install. Trees that can be planted in a registered forest or within local communities as part of the projects we deliver. Gifting directly back to the community and helping promote biodiversity. Clerk has requested further information.
* Received emails from 5 parishioners concerned about pre-school and the potential charge associated with the use of the village play park. Most nurseries and preschool do have their own playground in their setting. However, it is acceptable that in a village setting this may not be completely possible. The Pre-school is run by some very passionate individuals who are not necessarily running it for profit but rather for the development and benefit of the community.

We do strongly feel that the use of these outdoor facility is extremely important for the development of Pre-schoolers and denying them of the use (whether the reason being cost or else) will jeopardise that development. We would like you therefore, to reconsider this proposition.

Clerk has responded to parishioners “The matter of charging preschool/businesses for the use of the playpark was motioned for discussion at the parish meetings on the 18th February and 18th March as the Chairman had been approached by a number of parishioners. As a parish council we take all parishioner's opinions into consideration.

The Parish Council also needs to be mindful of any liability/risk assessment when it comes to the safeguarding of children.

Though the Parish Council are certain that our insurance covers for public liability and child minding/pre-school have their own public liability, we wanted to check for clarity as pre-school in particular had used the play park as their main outdoor space most mornings prior to the pandemic that the parish council's insurance and risk assessment policy is covered. It is on this basis that the matter had not been concluded at the 18th March parish meeting.

* Received an email from parishioner concerning the entrance to the Lees track adjacent to Help Hire. Parishioner has obtained a quotation for a tarmac surface. Parishioner has inquired if the parish council would be able to contribute towards the cost.
* Received an email from a parishioner concerning the speeding traffic through the village and concerns for their children’s safety walking into the village from Buck Street.
* Received an email from Mrs Riley who will be taking over the pre-school from September and wishes her points to be raised at the parish meeting.

Matters arising from correspondence.

* Clerk has responded to parishioner thanking them for the quotation for the Lees entrance and will be contacting all parishioners with the two other quotations for their consideration. Clerk is waiting on a breakdown of quotation from one of the contractors. For any hard surface on the Lees common, the Parish Council are required to apply for permission from the Secretary of State.
* Clerk has responded to parishioner concerning road safety in Buck Street and informing of Parish Council’s action and proposed A251 Faversham Road Safety Improvements project in collaboration with Badlesmere/Sheldwich and Boughton Aluph Parish Councils. Parish Council to complete a Highways Improvement Plan. Advised parishioner to write to KCC Ward Councillor Charlie Simkins and Police Commissioner Matthew Scott. Both are due for re-election in May.

Finances

The current account balance on 31st March 2021 is £17352.11.

The NS&I account balance is £19,429.45.

William Oure Charity £4109.80

**Internal Audit** to take place on 19th April 2021 in the Audrey Allen room for the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

**Forester 2020/21** hasbreakeven/profit.  The following number of factors have contributed to this: -

1. Reduction in printing costs from £264 to £136.66 per issue since 2019.

2. Increase in advertising revenue to £4229.00 average yearly advertising is £3600 since 2006.

3. Due to the pandemic a reduction in 2 print issues (printed 50 copies for parishioners who do not have access to online copy of the forester, hand delivered by Clerk.  Molash received 5 copies.

The Parish Council is pleased that the Forester has started to pay for itself (thanks mainly to the reduction in printing costs) and the efforts of the Forester Sub-Committee and we need to be mindful we are not making a profit and benchmark for advertising revenue at £4,000.

The following cheques for April were signed by Chairman Fisher & Councillor Ramsden

Chq no. 022108 J Sandy Groundworks, The Lees £245

022109 R Wilkinson Wildflower labels £12.99

022110 HMRC Clerk’s Tax £315.20

022111 Playdale Play equipment deposit £8400 (£1400 VAT)

022112 Challock Memorial Hall – Hire of office £500

A252 Road Safety Improvements

Alan Osuoha has looked through the comments from the Parish Council and provided feedback.

Alan thanked the Parish Council for the feedback and will continue to address the raised issues on this scheme.

There are two works review period to complete.

Road Safety Audit Stage 3 – to identify any safety concerns raised post construction.

General Safer Roads Route Review – Impact of the proposal on driver behaviour i.e., speeds, collision etc.

Faversham Road Footpath

Clerk has emailed Darren Hickman to commence with the legal matters of the footpath. KALC is sending the Clerk details of loan application for the footpath. ABC are providing £18,000 funding towards the footpath.

Play Park Duty of Care/Liability

Chairman Fisher read out Parish Councils duty of care towards employees, contractors and the public who use the play facilities they own or manage. Parish councils should have a clear policy towards site inspection, with clearly defined responsibilities for the employees or contractors undertaking the inspections and good record keeping.

To ensure the equipment in the play park is safe, we must carry out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment, just as they would for other health and safety related hazards. To follow government guidance and carry out risk assessments.

The government advice is just that it is guidance and should be followed where possible, but insurers understand that if the equipment is to be re-opened (for all the benefits that brings) then a certain amount of reasonableness needs to be considered.

In respect of the guidance, it states that it is “advisable to clean” the equipment.

The guidance also states Owners and operators should encourage effective sanitation by users, parents, guardians, and carers.

As far as insurers are concerned we would only be criticised if we just opened the park equipment and took no action whatsoever. By doing the risk assessment, putting up signs etc we are doing what is required. Clerk has put up new signs. Clerk arranges for weekly sanitization of the play park and replenishes the antibacterial bottle.

The current risk policy is that the Clerk carries out a play park check once a week/fortnight and we have an annual external inspection by ROSPA. It is also noted in risk policy that some Councillors do occasional inspections. In 2013, Landscapes did a weekly inspection. This was stopped to save money. ROSPA offers an inspection template geared to the play park for the Clerk to use when carrying out an inspection. This costs £30 and can be done at the same time when ROSPA carries out inspection in July. Councillors considered re-instating external weekly inspection or for the Clerk to continue with weekly inspection using template provided by ROSPA. Clerk has requested a quotation from Commercial Services. In 2013 the play park inspections cost £450 annually. The Chairman commented that the Parish Council should consider reinstating the external play park inspections rather than put the responsibility on the Clerk shoulders.

Regarding pre-school and public liability. BHIB says there is no additional insurance premium for community groups, childcare or pre-school who use the play park on a regular basis. It is recommended to check with the pre-school that they carry out an inspection prior to using the play park and it is recorded. This covers both the pre-school and parish council under both public liabilities. This also needs to apply to the youth club. In the past they have been told not to use it. However, the youth club is now open to children from 10 years and so can access the play park providing youth club leaders are supervising. Again, we should ask/check with the youth club to carry out an inspection prior to each session and their public liability covers for outdoor facilities. Insurers recommend the parish council sees sight of community groups public liability certificate.

The email received from Mrs Riley echoes BHIB stance on no additional insurance premium as Mrs Riley has own fully comprehensive Insurance and risk assessments are their responsibility while the children are in their care, and the parish council’s responsibility is to ensure the equipment is safe for any member of the public to use remains the same should pre-school use it or not. Mrs Riley assures the parish council that the staff at the pre-school have always ensured that any litter has been removed daily and continually carried out daily risk assessments on behalf of the PC to ensure that the equipment is safe for the children.

Mrs Riley would like to put her view forward to state that the Pre-School will not under any circumstances be paying to use the play park, should the PC decide that this is the option they vote to take, we will take the children in our mini bus and take them to the neighbouring play areas such as Charing, Chilham, Wye and our beautiful Kings Wood, in my 20 years of childcare I have never been asked to pay to take a child into a public play park.

Councillors agreed that the matter of public liability and confirmation from our insurers can now be concluded.

Mrs Sellens informed the Parish Council pre-school public liability certificate is on display in the notice board in the village hall.

Planning

**21/00601/AS -** Tulip Tree House, The Lees, Canterbury Road, Challock, Ashford, Kent, TN25 4DE

Single-Storey Rear Extension; Enlarged Window to Rear Elevation; Loft Conversion with 2 No. Dormer Windows to Rear Elevation; Detached Garage with Annexe.

**Comments: In Support providing neighbours views are taken into consideration.**

**All agreed.**

For information following Tree Preservation Order

1. ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO 2, 2020 Pony Park, Canterbury Road, Challock, Ashford, Kent. TN25 4DL

On 17 March 2021, the Council revoked the above Tree Preservation Order. The Tree Preservation Order is being revoked to consolidate three Orders that cover the High Snoad Wood area, this will make the understanding and administration more straightforward for landowners, residents, and applicants.

1. ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO 12,2006

Woodland between Leeways and Woodlands, Canterbury Road, Challock

On 17 March 2021, the Council revoked the above Tree Preservation Order.

The Tree Preservation Order is being revoked to consolidate three Orders that cover the High Snoad Wood area, this will make the understanding and administration more straightforward for landowners, residents, and applicants.

1. ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL TREE PRESERVATION ORDER NO. 1,2021 High Snoad Wood, Green Lane, and Canterbury Road, Challock, Kent.

W1 Woodland mainly comprised of Sweet Chestnut, Hazel, Ash, Oak and Cherry W2 Woodland comprised mainly of Hazel, Willow, Ash, Cherry and Birch. T1 Oak. Thirteen residents affected have received the above order.

Councillors raised no objections.

**Ratification of Planning Applications**

There were no planning applications to ratify.

Items for Information

1. **Speed watch**

Clerk is liaising with Speed watch to arrange training sessions for 2 groups. The proposed speed watch points have not been approved due to health and safety reasons. Clerk is waiting to hear on new proposed sites.

1. **Community Litter Pick**

Clerk to organize litter pick after completed training. Parishioners can borrow equipment should they wish to carry their own litter pick.

1. **The Lees – Bollards Implementation**

The implementation of the bollards at the top section of the Lees is near completion. Feedback from parishioners has been well received. The grounds man has removed alternative reflectors from the bollards to reduce the impact. The lights should dull down in time. Groundsman has had to order additional 18 bollards and 40 bags of postcrete. The grounds man had to hand dig the perimeter along Canterbury Road due to fibre optic cabling. This has required more postcrete than anticipated.

1. **New Play Park Equipment**

Clerk has completed order form and the installation of the new equipment is planned for the beginning of June 2021.

1. **Challock Goose Fair**

In the past the goose fair has helped with funding for a new village hall and for local clubs. Funding is becoming more difficult to obtain for community clubs, church and for parish projects. Funding for new or improved footpaths and road safety measures are proving difficult to obtain. The main avenue available to parishes is through S106 developer contributions for developments of more than 10 dwellings. Clerk requests consideration to start up the goose fair committee. Clerk is happy to volunteer to assist with organizing the event i.e., do the phone calls, make enquiries at the bequest of the committee.

Councillors discussed starting up the goose fair committee.

Noted. The majority of goose fair equipment is rotten. The metal spikes used with the orange netting have been stolen.

The goose fair committee would have to start from scratch.

Councillor Hardie suggested looking into setting up a crowd funding page.

Discussion took place on holding boot fairs and putting a notice in the forester to gauge interest in forming a committee and enough volunteer helpers. Councillor Brown offered to help with the goose fair.

Councillor Ramsden asked Mr John Burden for his opinion as he is organizing the Country Fair.

Councillors agreed for Mr Burden to speak.

Mr Burden informed the Parish Council of the organization and the work involved. Had over 80 volunteers in helping out at the event. The funds raised were to help the Church and the cricket club. Unfortunately, have been set back due to Covid and unlikely to be going ahead this year. Had everything in place, public liability but now lost money due to Covid.

Councillor Ramsden commented on the amount of work involved and the number of volunteers required. The goose fair grossed £26,000.

Mr Burden raised his concerns that he felt the Country Fair is being hijacked. The goose

fair is too big an event and would be out of sync with the village.

Councillor Hardie said not being hijacked.

Councillor Thomas commented the goose fair would be a separate event. In the past there use

to be fete at Beech Court as well as the goose fair. Manageable and not escalate too quickly. Goose fair step by step basis, get something going.

Clerk informed Mr Burden that there is no intention to hijack the Country Fair.

Looking for funds towards footpaths, road safety and lower speed limit signs that KCC are unlikely to provide. Funds for community groups, Church etc. The goose fair will take some time to establish.

Councillor Hardie opportunity for parish council, friends of Challock church and community groups to come together through crowdfunding. Raising much needed funds.

A.O.B

Chairman Fisher enquired about the skate park installation as more than ever, the children need it.

Clerk informed the parish council that skate park funds are available to commence installation and planning permission. Waiting on the cricket club pavilion to be completed.

Councillor Aitken requested for the forester organisations contact list be updated in line with the welcome to Challock leaflet. Table Tennis Club and Kingswood Players need changing.

Parish Forum

Parishioner inquired about the wildflower areas and where they are located.

Mr Burden informed parishioner area 5 is to the left of the main lees section which has been seeded by the school children. The other areas are for re-wilding and not planting, waiting to see what throws up. There are plans to plant 1200 plugs in these areas in the Autumn. There has been a positive response from parishioners and there has already been 26 wildflower varieties coming up.

Mr Burden to email map of the areas to Councillor Hardie who will add it to the village website.

Date of the next Meeting

Next parish virtual AGM Thursday, 6th May 2021.

Due to government legislation virtual meetings will not continue beyond 7th May 2021. The Local Government Bulletin update for 25 March, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government confirmed that the government has considered the case for extending legislation on holding virtual meetings and has concluded that it is not possible to bring forward emergency legislation on this issue at this time. Under government guidelines parish meetings can resume at indoor venues after the 21st June.

Councillor Hardie enquired if hybrid meetings could take place when we return to the village hall. Clerk to make enquiries.

**Future Parish Meeting Dates:**

Due to possible continuation of social distancing measures the following proposed meeting dates will be held in the main hall and not the Audrey Allen room.

Tuesday 22nd June 2021 Annual Parish Meeting Main Hall

Wednesday 7th July Main Hall

Wednesday 15th September Main Hall

Wednesday 13th October Main Hall

Wednesday 17th November Main Hall

**The meeting closed at 9.01 pm.**

**Signed as a true record by: ……………………………Michael Fisher Chairman Challock Parish Council**

**Dated……………………………………….**