**Challock Parish Council Virtual Minutes**

Memorial Hall, Audrey Allen room

Thursday, 18th March 2021, 7.30 pm

Members of public present: 5

Apologies

None

Present

Michael Fisher (Chairman), Russell Jaques (Vice Chair), 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, Russell Jaques, Max Thomas, Tony Aitken, Tracy Brown, and John Ramsden had no new changes to the declarations of interest.

Councillor Duncan Hardie declared an interest under planning application 21/00435/AS.

Minutes of Last Meeting

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

Approved by Councillor Thomas and seconded by Councillor Hardie.

All agreed.

PC Luke Jones Report for February

There were 4 reported crimes of note including theft of wheelie bin, criminal damage, and burglary (non-dwelling) where a barn was broken in to.

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.

Have been out delivering advice on crime prevention to farmers in rural communities.

Clerk’s Report

**Highways**

Potholes and damaged kerb stone reported on Blind Lane ref 557484 & 557486.

Reported pothole adjacent to drain in Buck Street, footpath entrance to cricket ground. Ref 557499.

Reported overgrown side edges on footpath, High Tree Lodge to cottages, Buck Street.

**KCC Vision Zero: The Road Safety Strategy for Kent 2020 – 2026**

Clerk has completed online consultation on behalf of the Parish Council. Councillor Aitken has also completed online submission.

**ABC**

Reported damaged Buck Street sign opposite the Halfway Pub.

**Police 101**

Clerk reported increase motorcyclists speeding through the village weekend 27th/28th February.

**Public Rights of Way**

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

**Cricket Ground**

Bridle gates have now been fitted at the entrances at the bottom of the cricket ground. Additional fencing on each side of the bridle gates have also been installed to fill the gap. Looking at changing the hinges to self-closing.

**The Lees**

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

Grounds man to clean out drain at the village stores on Monday, 22nd March.

Today G W Gardening have removed the conifer and large tree adjacent to Leeside.

**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. ABC are aiming at making litter picks more accountable in the future. This course will provide the skills and knowledge to organise, promote, and deliver a successful litter pick or clean up event.

Noted. 19.35 Councillor Jaques joined the meeting

Correspondence

* Received email from NALC regarding members will be aware that the present 4th April 2020 Regulations (covering online and remote meetings) are due to cease on the 6th May 2021.
* Received an email from Kent Gliding Club notifying the Civil Aviation Authority and Department of Transport have lifted lockdown flying restrictions for general aviation instructors to ensure currency can be maintained. It has been agreed that Kent Gliding Club will commence a programme of limited essential flying practice for its instructors this week.
* Received an email from parishioner regarding installing entrance gates and brick wall to their property adjoining the Lees common.
* Received an email from parishioner requesting to plant 3 silver birch trees in area 2 of the rewilding and have available other small tree saplings for other wooded areas of the Lees.
* Received an email from Terry Mortimer ABC advising the parish council it is not a requirement of the Borough Council that a parish council should only support or object on planning applications. With the understanding that planning officers may on occasion have asked parish councils to clarify reasons for supporting or objecting. This is in response to a parishioner writing to ABC concerning parish council supporting comments for planning application 4 Clevedon Court. Parishioner questioned the parish council supporting the application and responding too early, not allowing for neighbours’ comments to be lodged on the planning portal.
* Received email from parishioner regarding Hurstwood obsolete drive. Future plans are to lay the area to grass.  As building has commenced at number 2, Lilybuds, we would like to request that we are able to continue to use the driveway until the end of this year to keep the roadway as clear as possible whilst heavy vehicles are accessing to do the building work, if possible?
* Received an email from parishioner for consideration for a natter bench to be installed in one of the rewilding areas. Parishioner willing to contribute towards the cost of the bench or ask local businesses if they wished to donate one.
* Received a request from parishioner regarding sewage works in Chapmans Close and if the Parish Council can lend their support.
* Received an email from parishioner commenting on how nice the bridle gates look. Parishioner referred to previous parish minutes and discussion to ask the preschool for a donation towards using the play park. Asking what reasons, the Parish Council would have to do this? There are lots of other local childcare groups & businesses which use it so would they also be asked for a donation?   If the idea is for an ongoing fund towards general maintenance and upkeep why not put a donation box somewhere secure so that everyone has an opportunity to donate & not single out the preschool.
We frequently stay in Suffolk and one of our favorite play parks is in Westleton.  They have an honesty box with suggested donation of £1 towards grass cutting and use of the car park which I am sure lots of people would be happy to pay.
* Received an email from parishioner concerning the entrance on the Lees opposite Help Hire. Parishioner asking the parish council to fix the entrance.
* Received email from the Rewilding Project concerning phrase 2 and looking to plant wildflower plugs around the beginning of August. The areas 1 – 4 will need to be mowed down around the end of July and if the contractor is available. In order to plant the plugs, I have already recruited a dozen or so volunteers to help grow them through the summer and then we will arrange a community planting session when they are ready. Have received a donation to cover the cost of the seed trays and Serena Shirley has kindly donated the seeds.

Matters arising from correspondence.

* The Parish Council has declined the offer of trees on the Lees for the time being as we have recently planted 7 tree saplings and agreed to a further tree to be planted adjacent to Haverbrack. If further trees are fallen then the Parish Council would consider replacing them as the situation arises. The parishioner was given the opportunity to plant the trees in the wooded area by Beech Court Gardens but was declined upon site meeting.
* According to Planning Inspectorate and Open Spaces providing the gates and wall are within the parishioner’s boundary no planning permission is required. Councillors have no objections to parishioner’s proposed installation of brick wall, pillars, and gate as this is within parishioner’s boundary providing parishioner ensures the access/driveway is not widened or altered when installing the wall, pillars, and gate as this would be subject to changes to easement.
* Councillors agreed to permitting parishioner temporary use of obsolete driveway until the end of the year.
* Re sewage issue in Chapmans Close, Clerk has replied to parishioner, the Parish Council will take into consideration parishioners’ comments extra dwellings to an already over stretched system when planning application is submitted.
* Clerk informed Councillors another parishioner has kindly offered to donate a bench to be installed in one of the rewilding areas. Councillors agreed to accept the donation of a bench to be placed in area 5. Clerk to check with parishioner donation includes concrete base and installation.
* Chairman informed Councillors that the motion of charging a rent to businesses came from a number of anonymous parishioners who approached him directly. Chairman Fisher informed members HMRC if nurseries are classed as a charity then no charge can be made. If a registered business can donate in kind. Councillor Jaques commented the play park is for the community, if businesses are using the play park have concerns legally. Discussion took place on the wear and tear of play park. Annual maintenance costs are £3,000 mainly spent on bark replenishment.

Noted ABC do not contribute to the maintenance costs.

It was agreed to check parish council insurance documents for play park equipment and liability and forward to next meeting before deciding.

Clerk to email documents to Councillors after the meeting closes.

* Entrance to the Lees – grounds man has temporary filled the area with loose planings. Clerk awaiting on clarification of one of the quotations and will write to parishioners with costings of suppliers. An S38 application for hard surface on the Lees common would need to be made to the Secretary of State for Food and Rural Affairs. With regards to easements repairing obligations without which no positive burden to do so is generally imposed on the owner of the land over which the easement is exercised. Easement deeds states property owners pay a fair proportion for the repairs of the tracks. As landowners the Parish Council has a duty and must not allow any land which they occupy to be in a condition which might cause injury or damage to anyone who could be expected to enter on land which they own or occupy. Clerk is liaising with Open Spaces & KALC in moving this issue forward.
* Councillors approved phrase 2 wildflower project.

Finances

The current account balance on 28th February 2021 is £17,656.71.

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

William Oure Charity £4109.80

Internal Audit to take place on 11th May 2021 in the Audrey Allen room.

**Easement**

Easement for plot 4, The Gables. The deed has now been completed and funds of £2,000 has been transferred.

A252 Road Safety Improvements

Councillor Thomas read out report to parishioners in attendance. Councillors approved the drafted feedback report on the A252 Road Safety Improvements. Councillor Jaques said the roundabout is more dangerous, traffic is not slowing down, and chevrons are not effective.

Speeding – Camera van

Chairman Fisher expressed his disappointment on the in-action of the police in arranging for a camera van to monitor speeding through the village. Chairman Fisher motioned for the clerk to write to the crime commissioner. All agreed.

Faversham Road Footpath

Clerk has completed call for capital projects funding spreadsheet and sent to KCC Sarah Nurden. Clerk has made enquiries to Road Safety Trust UK and will be able to apply for the outstanding grant of £17,500 in September 2021 for Faversham Road Footpath scheme. During this period, the Parish Council finances are reviewed and if any savings have been made, further funds can be added towards the footpath.

Play Park Equipment

The Parish Council has been successful in securing £10,000 lottery funding for the replacement play park equipment. Total funds available are £14,000 for replacing the junior and toddler swing and agility trail, all have been recommended for decommissioning by ROSPA. Quotations and designs have been distributed to Councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors agreed to accept Playdale quotation.

Welcome to Challock Leaflet

Councillors approved the Welcome to Challock Leaflet and agreed for the printing of 30 copies at £6.72.

Planning

Under declarations of interest Councillor Hardie left the meeting room whilst the following planning application was discussed.

**21/00435/AS -5 Forest Cottages, Challock, Ashford, Kent, TN25 4AR**

**Proposed one and half storey side extension application (revision to planning permission 18/01002/AS)**

**Comments: No problem with this application. A good design by architect. Providing neighbours views are taken into consideration. Support.**

**All agreed.**

For information following Tree Preservation Order

**21/00001/TP 2 The Green, Canterbury Road, Challock, Ashford, Kent, TN25 4DF**

Norway Maple (T1) as per ABC TPO No. 7, 2012. This tree is marked on the sketch plan as T1-7-2012 - crown reduction of 2-3 metres in order to maintain size and shape. Birch (T1) as per ABC TPO No. 12, 2003. This tree is marked on the sketch plan as T1-12-20 crown reduction of 1-2 metres as part of regular maintenance.

Councillors raised no objections.

**Ratification of Planning Applications**

There were no planning applications to ratify.

Items for Information

1. **Spring Clean Litter Pick**

Clerk proposed to organize a weekend spring clean litter pick in early May. Clerk suggest organizing a village litter pick on Saturday, 9th May and A251 Kings Wood area on Sunday, 10th May. Clerk to gauge offers to either carry out a litter pick in the village or Kings Wood area in April’s forester.

Councillors agreed for clerk to organize a spring clean litter pick and look to move the date towards the end of May subject to covid restrictions.

1. **The Lees – Bollard implementation**

Clerk has received plans of BT optic cabling installed along the Lees, Beech Court Gardens end. The Groundsman will need to hand dig this area when installing bollards as it is too close to the optic wiring. Works are due to commence week commencing 29th March allowing up to 4 days to complete. Clerk has completed Declaration of Exempt Works and notify relevant bodies i.e., Secretary of State, open spaces etc. Clerk to notify residents prior to works commencing.

1. **Wildflower Borders**

Area 5 – adjacent to planings. The grounds man has prepared the area ready for the school children to plant the seeds. The Rewilding Project group will be liaising with Councillor Aitken and the school and assist with marking out the area for the classes and dividing up the wildflower seeds for each class. The rewilding project group have marked out the other areas. The first cut by commercial services have taken place. The grounds man will carry out a backup of the Lees early April.

1. **War Memorial**

Councillors agreed for Clerk to plant poppy seeds around the memorial for continuation of flowers post daffodils. Parishioner in attendance offered some poppy seeds kindly donated by Victoriana Nursery to for the wildflower project.

A.O.B

Chairman Fisher commented on obtaining funding for the Faversham footpath as soon as possible in order to commence works. It has taken a long time to get to this stage and Ward Councillor Charlie Simkins has helped considerably with funding from members grant. Councillor Ramsden motion if we were not successful in securing funding by the end of this year to precept for the remaining funds for the installation of the footpath during 2022. This would be a one-off precept amount.

Parish Forum

Parishioner commented on the joining instructions for this parish meeting was published incorrectly in February’s forester. Councillor Jaques directed parishioners to the parish council’s website posted correct joining instructions.

Parishioner informed the councillors that Play Group have their own public liability insurance and is not exclusive when using the play park and tend to leave when members of the public with their children enter. Parishioner stressed not only pre-school uses the play park and are not using all of the equipment. Parishioner felt the pre-school was being singled out as the wording in the minutes stated playgroup. Councillor Jaques apologized the incorrect wording was used and the intention is to consider not just the pre-school but other providers.

Councillor Hardie suggested forming a sub-committee to invite parishioners who have approached the Chairman regarding charging providers for use of the play park.

Chairman Fisher our job as elected members to take in views of all our parishioners and come to a decision between ourselves.

It was agreed to make a final decision at the next parish meeting upon checking parish council insurance and liability ensuring the safeguarding of children are met.

**The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.**

Parish Council Meeting Dates for 2021

Next Zoom Parish Meeting Thursday, 15th April 2021

**Future Parish Meeting Dates:**

Thursday 20th May AGM

Tuesday 15th June 2021 Annual Parish Meeting Main Hall

Thursday 15th July

Thursday 16th September

Thursday 14th October

Thursday 18th November

NALC is currently working with the Local Government Association and others to press for a continuation beyond May 2021 of the flexibility to hold remote council meetings.

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

**Dated……………………………………….**