Challock Parish Council Annual Meeting Minutes

Memorial Hall

Tuesday 18th June 2019, 7.30pm

Members of public present: approximately 18

Present

Michael Fisher (Chair) Dianne Sandy (Clerk), Trevor Smith, Max Thomas & Russell Jaques.

KCC Ward Councillor Charlie Simkins.

Apologies

Annabel Burden (Vice Chair), John Ramsden & ABC Ward Councillor Larry Krause

Welcome

Cllr Michael Fisher welcomed everyone to the meeting. Sue Starkings Vicar to Kingswood Benefice requested if she could do her report and report on behalf of ABC Ward Councillor Larry Krause at the beginning of the Annual Parish Meeting as she had another meeting to attend.

ABC Ward Councillor Larry Krause

Sue Starkings read out the following report on behalf of ABC Ward Councillor Larry Krause who was unable to attend due to another meeting.

Firstly, let me apologize for not being able to attend in person tonight, I have asked the better person in my life to substitute though, and she will be great at it.

Following the sad and quite unexpected death of Cllr Stephen Denhel, Ward Member for Downs North, I have been looking after his ward as well as my own so has been very busy, but I felt it necessary for the people of that Ward to have Borough Councillor representation. (Yes, I volunteered to do it when I heard of Stephen’s death.) A by-election will be held in July and the newly elected Member will then take over this role. It has also been my “Good Fortune” to have been appointed Deputy Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing, covering everything from the NHS in Ashford to Stop Smoking and the ever pleasant job of Parking Wardens along with a ‘treasure’ all of less popular jobs as part of the portfolio all of which will be a learning curve of some proportion and require many hours of meetings and training to learn all about the vital jobs that have been entrusted to me. My most important role will always remain the role of Ward Member for Downs West and the parishes within my Ward, but it seems I am also needed to carry out some other tasks. So along with this my most pleasant job, being your Ward Member, I have also picked up a myriad of other roles, namely:

Chair of the Audit Committee

Vice-Chair of Licensing and Health and Safety Committee

Also, a Member of the following committees:

Overview & Scrutiny, Planning, Appeals, Investigation & Disciplinary and Joint Transportation Board.

The Leader of the Council has also asked me to be the ABC Member representing the council on four different charity boards.

All of which will require quite a lot of my time and again I apologize for missing tonight’s meeting but as the Chair of the Audit Committee my attendance at their meeting of the new Administration was required as there are many issues to be discussed and decided. (Their meeting is also tonight starting at 7 pm but I have been in meetings and training today since 5 pm, so been a longish day of learning. Was also at an all-day training session yesterday, Monday, as part of the ongoing process of ‘getting up to speed’.

All these new roles do not mean a change in the priorities that I shall be working on with your Challock Parish Council, the biggest being that of the footpath along the A251 which I remain firmly committed to ensure is built!

KCC has also announced quite a substantial amount of funds to improve the A252 from Charing to Chilham. The funding has been pledged and the affected parishes are aware of some of the plans, I was at Molash the other night making sure their needs are being met in terms of what they would like to see come out of the “dreams” of KCC.

The Leader of ABC has committed to have officers look at all parish council meeting dates to try and find dates for meetings that clash as little as possible however with such a large portfolio as mine along with all the committees and four charities that may not always be possible. I will of course always be available on email and if I do miss a meeting please still feel free to ring or email me and keep me on the list of social events. (Boughton Aluph had me open their Fayre the other weekend, they won’t ask me again as the rain was torrential and the day was not the success they would normally expect. Even took ‘the vicar’ with me on that day but still it poured.)

For all those in attendance tonight the invitation is extended to everyone to make contact with any issues you might have that concern the Borough Council. If it not an issue for the Borough then perhaps, I could advise just who might be able to help, Councillor Charlie Simkins is approachable with County Council terms (remember though his area covers 11 parishes, so he is looking after an area somewhat bigger than mine.)

My contact details are available on the ABC website or if that is a problem Di Sandy and Mick Fisher have my number and email if you need them.

I wish you all every prosperity and please know that I am “in Challock’s corner” when needed and will always endeavor to help with anything parishioners’ might need assistance with.

So again, apologies for missing this important meeting but rest assured I am there in ‘spirit’!

Kingswood Benefice

Sue Starkings gave a presentation on **Challock Church** part of Kingswood Benefice consisting of 5 churches (Challock, Molash, Chilham, Godmersham, Crundale).Kingswood Benefice is administered by Reverend Paul Ratcliff (Rector) and Reverend Sue Starkings (Associate Priest); next year there will be a reduction in ministry but this will not affect the services at Challock Church. Challock Church will remain open and fully operational. Friends of Challock Church are very active and have held a number of events during the year with Snowdrop Teas, Daffodil Teas and recently John Ward Art all have been very successful raising much needed funds. Up and coming events for the rest of the year are the Invicta Choir, Flower Festival and Christmas Fayre. Keys to the Church are kept at the Post Office if anyone wishes to visit the Church.

Thanking parishioners for their support.

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 19th June 2018

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting 19th June 2018 signed by the Chairman Michael Fisher as accurate and correct.

Chairman’s Report

Cllr Michael Fisher reported on the following:

**Welcome**

As Chairman I am pleased to report on the highlights of the activities of Challock Parish Council during the past year. I am privileged to have a hardworking committed team of Parish Councillors and to report on the considerable work carried out by them. My thanks to you all for your support during the past year. Emma Fox stood down as Councillor at the May Elections. Wished to thank Emma for her support and wish her well for the future. Russell Jaques was successfully co-opted on to the Parish Council.

**Finance**

Finances have maintained good order however; all levels of local government have to operate under severe financial constraints and Challock Parish Council need to be mindful of this. The Parish Council continues to look at maintaining costs to a minimum. The Parish Council need to be cautious with our future spending and projects and cannot rely on grants we have traditionally received.

**Highways**

Speeding issues continue to be a particular concern in the Village. Our efforts to date have included encouraging the Police to be active in speed monitoring. Further correspondence with Damian Green MP regarding a new footpath along Buck Street/Faversham Road and speeding through the village; Damian has offered his support on the new footpath and will be taking the speeding up with KCC Highways. During 2018 a Highways Inspector carried out an assessment of the traffic in Church Lane during the school drop off and pick up times, the outcome was to extend yellow lines along Church Lane and/or to install a footpath adjacent to The Chequers. This will be subject to obtaining future funding.

Councillors’ Annabel Burden and John Ramsden and the Clerk have recently attended the A252 Safer Roads Fund Scheme to view proposed safety improvements along A252 between the villages of Chilham and Charing. In our response to Highways we stated in Challock we have a 40MPH speed limit and also large red SLOW on the road approaching the 40MPH area, we also have traffic islands.

We however still get a large number of vehicles and motorcycles drivers who do not adhere to this and do 60MPH plus. The Parish Council has requested consideration for the installation of speed cameras through residential areas. There will be another A252 Safer Road Scheme meeting in July to confirm proposed safety improvements. The works are due to commence in September 2019 and completed by spring 2020.

**The Lees**

The pot holes on the Lees track have been maintained regularly as well as the odd fallen trees/shrub by the grounds man. Aspire are contracted to carry out the grass cutting as per schedule. The smaller areas are carried out by the grounds man. The Parish Council will continue to preserve the Lees and its amenities. Tree maintenance is currently being undertaken as a recent survey has showed up ash dieback and some trees suffering with decay. A donated tree for Freda Cantle will be planted on the Lees in the coming months along with a memorial plaque donated by the Parish Council. The Parish Council will be arranging for a memorial seat for Puff Miller to be placed in the church grounds.

**Post Office Car Park**

The post office car park was re-surfaced during 2018 funded by KCC ward Councillor Charlie Simkins grant, Challock Parish Council and a contribution from the post office.

**Play Area**

An annual safety inspection of the play equipment is undertaken for the Parish Council. Play bark has been replenished and repairs to apparatus to be completed by the end of June. The junior swing will require replacing sometime this year.

**Environment**

Overall the village is kept clean and tidy and the grounds man continues to do an excellent job in maintaining the Lees track and pathways. A dog/waste bin has now been installed at the Beech Court gardens.

In April the village litter pick was organized in conjunction with ABC Kent Clean Campaign.

7 adults and children picked litter around the village; the recreation ground, Blind Lane, Church Lane and the Lees. The Parish Council wishes to thank those who took part. The Parish Council also wishes to thank parishioners ‘unsung heroes’ who take it upon themselves to do the occasional litter pick, trim and tidy areas around the village and to thank volunteers who distribute and deliver the Forester Magazines.

**Publicity & Community Events**

Community events in the village have notably declined with the absence of the Challock Goose Fair.

The Methodist Chapel has held their annual boot fair. There are 2 spaces available for community groups in the village who wish to hold a boot fair to raise funds.

The Primary School, Methodist Chapel and Challock Church all make a real difference to the community we have. The Church is still looking to fill 2 vacancies for Church Warden. The Friends of Challock Church hold many events throughout the year and the Parish Council wishes to thank them for raising much needed funds for the church and giving great community spirit and bringing in visitors to our village. It is great to see Kings Wood Players returning with their Annual Pantomime. The Parish Council wishes to thank the cricket club for holding a bonfire firework display for the village.

Publicity is circulated via Notice Boards, KM Roundabout, Forester, Challock Website and Challock Chatter. Challock Parish Council will continue and endeavor to improve communications via these forms of media.

**William Oure Trust**

This trust originates from William Oure whose 2 acres of land in Pested Lane known as the Poor Field and its annual rent, the proceeds of which would be distributed by the church at Christmas time to the poor people of the Parish. The trust operates differently in these times and is registered with the Charity Commission. From time to time a request is made to the Parish Council to assist a parishioner who is in need. In January 2019 a new farm tenancy agreement has been assigned to a local farmer. The funds in the trust stand as of May 2019 at £3782.09. The poor field operates as an apple orchard.

**Planning**

The confines project took place during 2012/13 and in 2014 Ashford Borough Council gave its approval for the boundary changes to take place. A number of planning applications’ came forward during 2015. The majority of these dwellings are 4 bedrooms. Currently to date 48 houses have been completed and 6 houses are currently under construction.

Ashford Borough Council put forward to ABC Cabinet Committee for the inclusion of Omission Site at Orchard Lane for the development of 15 dwellings to the Local Plan.

The outcome was the Parish Council would not support applications for further developments and felt Challock had contributed enough through the village confines. During 2018 planning application for Old Clockhouse Green phrase 2 was lodged on the planning portal.

The Parish Council did not support this application as it is outside of the village confines. ABC approved the village envelope boundary at the cabinet meeting on 13th March 2014. The amended plans for Old Clockhouse Green phrase 2 for 19 dwellings have recently been added to the planning portal and will be discussed later this evening.

In autumn 2018 the Parish Council carried out a review of the village confines which coincided with a meeting with Daniel Carter Principal Planning Officer ABC advising that the Borough Council was undertaking a village envelope exercise in our parish to provide additional clarity in respect of where the confines of the built-up part of Challock should be regarded for the operation of planning policy and to guide decision-making on future planning applications. At the meeting the Parish Council expressed the view that they favoured leaving the confines as drafted through the 2014 exercise.

However, Daniel Carter advised that a revision to the 2014 confines might be required given the changes to the planning system since 2014 and the fact that the confines are now almost 5 years old and advised that the Parish Council would likely receive a revised version of the 2014 confines and that this would be less extensive than the current confines, given the need to be consistent with the definition in the Local Plan 2030.

A revised draft village envelope map for Challock was drawn, and a consultation meeting with the village took place on the 28th November. Our response to ABC sent in January 2019 was the overall feeling on the new revised confines map is that the Parish Council would prefer the village confines original to remain. The parish council and villagers worked hard to agree these confines and a lot was considered when making the final decisions. The overall process of ABC revised village confines appears rushed and has already been decided and many of our parishioners and parish council feel that we no longer have a clear direction which we had with the current confines. We understand ABC’s approach to making the line tighter due to HOU5 definition but we feel the new devised map is open to larger developments which Challock Parish Council have opposed all along unless we embark on a neighbourhood plan we no longer have a say. The Parish Council has recently received email correspondence from Daniel Carter arranging to meet the Parish Council to discuss a way forward concerning the village confines.

The Skate Park is still at the forefront as funding is almost complete and will be looking to move forward with this project commencing autumn 2019/20. The Parish Council would like to know if the young people are still keen to have a skate park. Going forward with the play park upgrade the Clerk will endeavor to secure funding through other avenues and through S106 contributions.

**First World War Commemorative 2018**

The First World War Commemorations event took place in the village hall involving a presentation by Councillor Trevor Smith and a sing-along of First World War songs with the Challock Ladies Choir. This was followed by a lantern parade to the war memorial and a service and reading of the names of the fallen by Councillor Mick Fisher. The Parish Council was successful in applying for Armed Forces Fund for 2 silhouettes which were on display in the school, church and around the village. There was a wonderful display of poppies surrounding the memorial made by the children from the school. The event was a huge success with over 150 parishioners attending. The Parish Council wishes to thank Councillor Trevor Smith, the Ladies Choir and the school for their contribution to this lovely community event.

**Future Plans**

* Skate Park with the expected target date of installation commencing autumn 2019/20.
* To continue to identify Outdoor Play Space Projects, including further upgrade of the play park and secure funding
* To continue to campaign for reduce speed limit and road safety measures around the village.
* To review the footways in the village and to look to continue campaigning for new footways to be added in particular Faversham Road.
* To commence planning for the commemorative of the 75th VE Celebrations.

The Parish Council are keen to know the projects residents would like to see the Council working on along with dealing with issues, requests for grants and support. Residents are welcomed to attend Parish Meetings, contact through email or mail to c/o Post Office.

parishclerkchallockpc@gmail.com or telephone mobile 07895494851.

**Concluding Remarks**

Thank you for coming to this evening’s Annual Parish Meeting and thank you all for your support.

Report from Charlie Simkins KCC Councillor for Ashford Rural for the year to May 2018

KCC Ward Councillor reported the following:-

There has been much talk by politicians, particularly those in government that economic austerity is ending. It is now widely recognized that the local government sector has been one of the main casualties of austerity, by virtue of a considerable reduction in the allocation of funds to local authorities over the last seven years. This has caused financial distress in a number of shire councils with Northamptonshire effectively going bankrupt. I am glad to say that this is not the case in Kent where financial stringency has kept us afloat.

Towards the end of last year central government finally accepted the severity of the problem by putting in excess of £1billion into the local government sector through various channels such as winter funding and pothole monies. This provided KCC with an additional £20m which helped solve this year’s funding gap.

For the sixth year in succession KCC has had to make significant savings and the whole organization has risen to the challenge of finding another £73m to fund rising spending pressures. We have therefore managed to balance the budget whilst continuing to preserve front line services.

In addition to delivering statutory services we continue to deliver the following non-statutory services.

£6.2m to subsidized bus services

£2.3m to economic development

£7.1m for Housing support for the most vulnerable

£6.5m for Community Wardens, arts, culture and country parks

£9.8m for children in need of family support

£8.1m for the Young Persons travel pass

KCC has also made its largest ever investment in Highways, rising from £70m last year to £89m in the current year and to £95.7m next year. This does not include the £28m recently received from the Department of Transport for Highway improvements. We have to acknowledge that these benefits do not come without a cost and regrettably it has been necessary to raise Council tax by 3% plus the additional 2% for the adult social levy.

One of the casualties of the necessary cuts in expenditure has been a reduction of 25% in Members Grants to £15,000 but I shall do my best to continue to distribute this equally amongst the 10 parishes in my area.

That is a snapshot of where KCC is placed and I trust that it shows a genuine desire by the County Council to manage its finances prudently and to continue to provide a wide range of statutory and non-statutory services across the Kent community.

Charlie Simkins informed the Parish Council that monies have been set aside for the footpath A251; able to commit £4,700 now for the design statement and a further £5,000 towards the footpath installation. Request that he is kept informed and updated regularly.

Open Forum for Village Clubs & Organisations

**Badminton Club** meets every Thursday evening at 8 pm. New members welcomed. £2 per session and £20 for annual membership.

**Friends of Challock Church** are very active and have held a number of events during the year with Snowdrop Teas, Daffodil Teas and recently Festival all have been very successful raising much needed funds. The recent Festival brought in over 200 visitors with Art and Photography Competitions and local clubs and associations promotion. Friends of Challock Church help sustain the Church building. The Friends of Challock Church were formed in 2003 and have raised £120,000 through fund raising and grants. Monies spent on electricity, heating, bore-hole, stone work, the fabric and contents of the Church.

Thanking parishioners for their support.

Tim Freeman requested on behalf of Friends of Challock Church and the Village Hall Committee for the Parish Council when claiming S106 contributions to consider an allocation of funds for the Church and Village Hall Committee.

After a 5 year break **Kingswood Players** held its first pantomime earlier this year massively successful raising £730 for chosen charity Great Ormond Street. The next year’s pantomime will be Aladdin with funds raised going into the hall, for a new stage set and costumes. There have been many new people joining with a crew of 20 volunteers. The Kingswood Players will soon be celebrating 50 years since it first started up.

**Challock Cricket Club** currently doing well in the league and new members welcome. A Fun Day will be held on the 7th July a social event Challock Cricket Club v Spice of Bengal to help raise funds; will be a barbeque, bar and bouncy castle. The cricket club is looking to hold its annual bonfire and fireworks display later this year. The pavilion bar will be open on Christmas Eve and has proven to be very busy. The pavilion bar is open every Friday evening. Funds raised go back into the cricket club and towards the new extension.

Parish Forum

**Amended Plans Clockhouse Green Phrase 2 –** Parishioners in attendance raised concerns regarding the new amended plans to Clockhouse Green Phrase 2. They commented that when they were purchasing houses in Clockhouse Green Phrase 1 they were informed only 7 additional houses will be built in the land behind. Earlier planning application submitted was for 15 dwellings and now the amended plans have increased to 19. Their main concern was the single vehicle access road and the increase traffic that will be using it. Not only residents of the new houses but 2 Lorries require daily access Trevor May’s and during the summer season agricultural vehicles use the access for entrance to the fields at the back. There are also concerns regarding the number of car parking spaces available in the housing development, in particular for visitor parking.

A parishioner commented that the amended plans consisted of land which did not belong to the developer which an apology has since been received. A parishioner suggested that under these circumstances the application should be withdrawn and new amended plans re-submitted. Other comments received by parishioners were the infrastructure unable to cope; the primary school is running at full capacity, inadequate footpaths and the playpark in need of refurbishment. Canterbury Road through the village is narrow along with the footpath adjacent to the Barn Shop. There is no footpath adjacent to Clockhouse so residents have to cross the road using the single access road. Residents requested that the access road into Clockhouse Green is adopted by KCC Highways and new footway is installed.

**Kings Wood View –** plans have been submitted for a two storey dwelling adjacent to The Beeches. The new dwelling appears too large and not in keeping. The dwelling has been set back further and not in-line with Beeches.

Councillor Mick Fisher thanked the parishioners for their comments for both applications discussed and would be taken their views into consideration when Challock Parish Council replies to ABC.

**UK Power Networks** – Parishioner commented on a letter and a map received from UK Power Networks concerning improvement works at Deerwood. Client is worried that UK Power Networks will be digging up their back garden. Clerk to make enquiries and report back to parishioner.

**Footpath request –** Parishioner enquired about a new footpath installed along the wooded area of the Lees. Parishioner said this has been raised many times in the past. Councillor Mick Fisher said that there have been a few requests from parishioners for footpaths in the village. This is subject to funding availability and the Faversham Road is currently being addressed.

**Michael Fisher Chair thanked everyone for attending.**

**Meeting closed at 8.45 pm.**

**Next Annual Parish Meeting to take place 2019 date to be confirmed.**