**Challock Parish Council Meeting Minutes**

Audrey Allen Room, Memorial Hall

Thursday, 15th June 2023, 7.30 pm

Members of public present:5

Apologies

There were no apologies received.

Relevant Legislation: Local Government Act 1972, s 85.

Present

Cllr Anthony Aitken, Chairperson Cllr Tracy Brown, Cllr Duncan Hardie, Cllr John Ramsden, Cllr Robert Shallcrass, Vice-Chairperson Cllr Max Thomas, Cllr Jayne Walpole & Di Sandy (Clerk).

Welcome

Chairperson welcomed everyone present to the parish meeting

Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interests.

Relevant Legislation: Localism Act 2011, s 31.

Minutes of Last Meeting

Minutes of 18th May 2023 AGM meeting were signed by Chairperson Cllr Brown as a true record.

Proposed by Vice Chair Cllr Thomas and seconded by Cllr Walpole.

All agreed

Minutes of 31st May 2023 Extraordinary meeting were signed by Chairperson Cllr Brown as a true record

Proposed by Vice Chair Cllr Thomas and seconded by Cllr Walpole.

All agreed

Relevant Legislation: Local Government Act 1972, Sch 12, para 41 (1).

Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

The Parish Council adopted and approved the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

**PCSO Natalie Faiers Downs West Ward Report**

The launch of the new neighbourhood Policing model in Kent. Each ward across the district will now have a nominated beat officer and their primary role is to work within their local communities.

The new beat officer for Downs West ward is PC Natalie Faiers and their supervisor will be Sergeant Richard Batten.

They would be grateful when officers are attending parish meetings, they are able to provide their updates and take any questions at the earliest opportunity in order to resume their operational beat roles.

Regular newsletters will also be produced updating your respective parish on local issues including statistics, prevention advice and policing activity in the area.

The new policing model will develop over time and as we are not yet at full establishment there are likely to be some changes to the wards as new officers join the district in the coming months. As always, we will aim to minimize disruption and keep you updated on any changes.

Resolved. PCSO Natalie Faiers report was received.

Clerk’s Report

**Highways**

Grounds man side edged & clear of overhanging vegetation for footpaths Buck Street, Old School House, Help Hire, The Barn Shop and on the Lees opposite Help Hire

Grounds man strimmed Faversham Road verge adjacent to Paddock View.

**PROW**

Reported fallen tree along Footpath adjacent to the Old School House.

Reported uneven/deep ruts along Bridel Path, Mill Lane.

Re-reported broken glass along Footpath adjacent to the Beeches, Buck Street.

**ABC**

Reported leaking water from Cesspool St Cosmas Close, Church Lane.

**The Lees**

Grounds man carried out back up on the Lees perimeter.

**Training**

Councillor Walpole has attended Social Media and Dynamic Councillor Training course.

**Funding**

Clerk and Councillor Walpole applied for KCC High Cost of Living Community Fund. £500 for Faversham Food Bank and £500 for Ashford One You Stop, Food Bank. Funds have been approved and funds will be issued at the end of the financial year.

Resolved. The clerk’s report was received.

Correspondence

* Received an email from ABC Alan Brind regarding the revised list of streetlights within the parish and the Parish Council to report back a list of lights that are deemed not necessary / required.
* Received an email from a parishioner concerning the increase traffic speeding and noise pollution. Parishioner would like to know how they can be part of the discussion around this topic with the aim of reducing traffic speeds through our village.
* Received an email from KALC reminding parish councils of closing date to apply for KCC Community Cost of Living Grant.
* Received an email from KCC Highways regarding the suspected Japanese Knotweed, Green Lane and upon investigation can confirm it is not Japanese Knotweed.
* The parish council have received two emails and one telephone call from parishioners concerning noise complaints from the Stag, public house. Clerk has signposted parishioners to Ashford Borough Council website.

All correspondence has been circulated.

Finances

The current account balance on 31st May 2023 is £20,898.62

£10,000 ring-fenced for Faversham Road Footpath.

Resolved. To transfer £10,000 to NS&I Reserves account.

Resolved. The bank account balances and reconciliations for May 2023 were signed by Chairperson Brown and Vice Chairperson Thomas.

Cheques signed for June by Vice Chairperson Thomas and Councillor Aitken.

Cheque No. 102714 J Sandy Footpaths Maintenance £375.72

Cheque No. 102715 Town & Parish Council Websites Councillor Email Accounts £228

Cheque No 102716 D Sandy Stationery/Ink £101.11

**Payments to be authorized**

Resolved. The Parish Council approved for the Clerk to order 10 bulk bags of hardwood bark for the play park. £95 per bulk bag plus VAT.

Resolved. The Parish Council to make enquiries into costings for a more sustainable surface for the Lees track before approving a further purchase of planings.

**Forester Reconciliation & Molash Contributions**

Forester Reconciliation for 2022/23 is £478 deficit. Molash Contributions is £78. Reason for deficit is due to increase in printing costs from £136 to £153. £360 down on advertising revenue. Molash Parish Council have requested a meeting to discuss the deficit.

Resolved. The Parish Council approved Forester Reconciliation and Molash Contributions Invoice.

Agreed to arrange a meeting with Molash Parish Council.

The NS&I account balance is £15685.29

William Oure Charity £3403.26

**Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Annual Governance & Accountability has been displayed on the Notice Boards and Parish Council Website dated Monday, 5th June until 14th July 2023.

Relevant Legislation: Accounts & Audit Regulations 2015.

**Highways Improvement Plan**

1. **Faversham Road Footpath Scheme**

Chairperson Cllr Brown updated the Parish Council the outcome of the teams meeting with KCC Highways, Kieran Doble and Jenny Watson that took place on Wednesday, 14th June. A positive meeting and with a realistic date of constructing the footpath Easter 2024. Looking at the footpath scheme to be carried out in 2

phases, the first phase up to the end of the first bungalow, with the removal of the hedge and oak tree. Reason for delays is the obtaining quotations from constructors. The UK Power Networks quotation of £110,000, KCC are going back to them to ask for a review of the quotation. Jenny Watson KCC will help deliver and pitch for funding to LTP (London Transport Planning, central government funding scheme). An ideal candidate for this scheme. Need to be patient, hopefully a positive outcome. Great potential for large amount of money, KCC Ward Councillor Charlie Simkins funds are still required.

Cllr Walpole – Issues with health and safety, footpath verge uneven and difficult to walk along and near the hedge opening a metal cut off post sticking out potential tripping hazard. More substance, evidence of complaints with residents’ feedback. Chairperson Cllr Brown at this stage not to create negativity when putting the bid forward.

Noted. There are two outstanding deeds of dedication yet to be completed.

Resolved. It is important to ensure deeds of dedication are completed before any works are carried out.

If not, successful alternative option is to carry out private work on the footpath, though ongoing maintenance would be met by the Parish Council.

Resolved. To write to KCC Ward Councillor Charlie Simkins the grant of £5000 is required towards the construction costs. Money has been promised. Not fair to take the money away.

Relevant Legislation. Highways Act 1980, ss.43.50

1. **Community Speed Watch Scheme**

Clerk gave an update on the Community Speed Watch in the village. The first speed watch session took place on Wednesday with Alan from the Police Community Speed Watch in attendance. Had a few teething problems initially with SID requiring reprogramming. We are down on volunteers by 50% and in order to carry out more sessions we need to recruit more volunteers. A new site along Buck Street at High Tree Lodge has been approved by the Police Community Speed Watch.

Resolved. Clerk to request sites at the Barn Shop/BTF entrance and adjacent to Paddock View.

Resolved. Clerk to re-advertise for volunteers wanted for Speed Watch campaign.

Relevant Legislation. The Road Safety Act 2006 (c 49)

1. **Resident’s complaint concerning speeding traffic and noise pollution.**

Resolved. Parish Council responded to the parishioner that noise pollution and speeding traffic through the village is not new and provided details of the Parish Council action to date. Asked the parishioner to consider joining the community speed watch team.

Relevant Legislation. The Road Safety Act 2006 (c 49)

1. **Proposal from ABC to remove unnecessary street lighting**

Resolved. The Parish Council to respond requesting to keep all 6-street lighting in the village.

Relevant Legislation: Local Government Act 1966

**Planning Applications**

To resolve observations to Planning Applications affecting the parish

Relevant legislation: Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**PA/2023/0940**

Land on SW side of Halfway House PH Roundabout, Canterbury Road, Challock, TN25 4BJ

The proposed erection of no.8 dwellings, with associated access, parking, and landscaping; including the provision of open space

The Parish Council resolved to object to this application.

The site is located within the AONB which is identified in paragraph 11 of the NPPF and associated footnote 7 to be a “protected area” which in this instance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed. Both the local plan and the NPPF highlight that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. The site is a prominent large open green space which provides an important contribution to the openness and greening of the village and the AONB in this area. The open nature of this the site helps define the sporadic form of the village. The proposed planning application taken much of this green space in the village will be harmful to the distinctive identity of the village and the important green areas that extend into the heart of the village centre and provide attractive gaps and relief between the pockets of development. The loss of this space would increase suburbanization of the area. The green open space contributes positively to the local character of the area and its loss would be considered harmful to the visual amenity of our rural village appearance.

In Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty greater weight should be given to conserving the scenic beauty. Built development within the AONB contributes to its visual quality (including open spaces that break up rural settlements) and is essential to maintaining the AONB as a natural resource. The visual harm from the loss of this prominent and valued open space would be harmful to our village set in AONB setting.

The layout of the proposed residential development appears dominated by hard surfacing and the facilitation of car usage and parking is not in keeping with the surrounding area. The Parish Council object to a new residential development on this valuable open space as not in keeping within our village, would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the village or the ANOB. The development would have significant harm on the appearance of this AONB location. The principle of this site would exacerbate an excessive density of the development in this rural area and contribute to the increasing suburbanization of the area and would harmfully erode the traditional rural character.  This is a prime central location of the village, visually from the crossroads of the A251 and A252 where the village sign is also located, which emphasizes the close proximity of Kings Wood. Direct access from the development onto the A252 serves to further exacerbates traffic heavy issues which the village faces daily, with narrow unsafe pavements for residents and then an additional access road to cross, creating  great concerns for the safety for pedestrians.

There is evidence throughout the plot of use by Bats, Nightingales, Slow Worm, Hedgehogs Dormice, Woodpeckers, and many other wild birds. All of which are protected species in terms of any form of development. Taking the few green spaces around this area will have a dire effect on the wildlife who feed in areas like the land they wish to build on. The reason these animals are using this habitat and nesting in this area is because it is likely to be valuable for them as a species because it fulfils their requirements. By removing some of these areas the animals use, such as hedges and grassland for the houses to be built on, it will disturb the wildlife and will create noise and light pollution, therefore probably decreasing the amount of value that area has for these species. A full and extensive independent survey need to be carried out. Nearby residents have all commented on sightings of bats in the vicinity. Once green space is gone it is gone for good.

The A252 cannot support the current volume of traffic and the lack of traffic management on the A252 has, for a number of years, posed cause for concern - speed issues, narrow footpaths, no safe crossings, poorly maintained roadway. Roads & Footpaths are in a poor state and road safety paramount concern to all living in the village. A252 has been classed as the top 50 dangerous roads in England.

The primary school is oversubscribed. Clock House Green Development has yet to be built and families wanting their children to go to the local primary school initially will not be able to get in. Another development would delay access to local school place over a longer period. There is no mains gas and sewage. In the past year it has become more evident we have poor water supply leading up to last year having no water for a week during the hottest day of the year. With villagers having to collect bottled water on a daily basis, the severe impact on the elderly and families on the hottest days of the year. The water supply problem is a risk to the health and safety and wellbeing to the current residents and population of Challock, as highlighted by Ashford MP Damien Green and BBC news in July 2022. Five days without running water caused great hardship and impact, not only for the 1100 Challock residents, but also forced the school and pub to close. Electricity supply is for some people within the village is very poor, the infrastructure was never designed for the number of houses, it’s a drain on the supply. There are people within the village unable to read a book in the wintertime due to low power. Until the water, electricity shortages, poor internet supply resolved, and mains drainage provided, then Challock should not be accepting any further housing development planning applications. We are close to several major towns and the City of Canterbury, with poor infrastructure for even the basics. It is not in the interests of the current residents of Challock to further reduce already poor resources.

With the number of houses being developed in the Borough and our village the pumping station at Charing is becoming unsustainable.

The bus service is poor due to infrequent times and availability, no evening or Sunday service. Challock has less than standard amount of play space and no allotments. ABC may not have reached its housing target, but Challock has gone way beyond its fair share of developments. We are already over capacity for the area. With no train station, no doctors, no water drain off, very poor internet service (no high-speed fibre) on a poor power grid and a school at its maximum. We no longer have a post office, and the post office has stopped post office hubs. Any further housing development in the village would put more pressure on our limited resources i.e., water supply, electricity.

It’s time to save our beautiful Kent countryside. Save what’s left of Garden of England.

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and AONB”. “The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited. With the inclusion of the Clock House Green development there will be in excess of 100 new dwellings in Challock, a 25% increase since 2015. We have reached and exceeded the limit and any further developments will be detrimental to the conservation and enhancement of Challock set in AONB.

Challock, Chilham & Wye villages are set in AONB and ABC have a duty towards the protection, enhancement and

conservation and therefore lead the way in ensuring that these are giving precedence.

**PA/2023/0850**

1 Kiln Close, Challock, Ashford, Kent TN25 4DA

Proposed single-storey side extension to the East elevation, additional drop kerb to create in & out driveway, internal alterations & updated fenestration. This is in addition to the previously approved application REF. 22/00026/AS which hasn't yet been started.

The Parish Council resolved to support this application.

**PA/2023/1071**

Denham, Buck Street, Challock, TN25 4AR

Single-storey rear extension and construction of new first floor with dormer windows following demolition of conservatory

The Parish Council resolved to support this application.

**Ratification of Planning Applications**

There are no planning applications to ratify.

Relevant Legislation: Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

**Funding**

**The government’s Community Ownership Fund has now been updated to accept applications from parish councils to help communities.**

Councillor Walpole updated the Parish Council on investigations made. Key points safeguarding community assets – run by the community for the community, run as a business. Café and public toilets, for example village hall. Awards up to one million though each bid expected to be in the region of £250,000.

Would need to demonstrate community asset is at risk of sustainability. 2 years revenue funding up to £50,000 to help run it including staffing costs. Match funding 20%, for example £250,000 would need to raise £50,000 through community shares and crowd funding. Need to know if there is a demand in the community, in depth with costs and business plan. 12 months to complete. There are 2 stages with the first being an expression of interest. Aims, status, hope to achieve for the community . May be able to get architects/builders to volunteer. There are 4 windows in a year to apply. Maybe worth exploring and meeting with the Village Hall Committee.

Chairperson Cllr Brown gave permission for member of the public to speak.

The village hall is currently well placed financially. Questioned whether there is a demand for a community pop up café.

Meeting re-opened.

Discussions took place regarding community hub/café and public toilets in the village and community assets at risk.

Councillor Ramsden – the village is not big enough for a community hub. Vice-Chairperson Cllr Thomas agreed

Councillor Aitken – Open it up to the village.

The Parish Council resolved to publicise and request feedback from parishioners of a community hub in the village.

Relevant Legislation: Localism Act 2011, ss.87 -108

**Under the Kent Plan Tree, there are opportunities for funding for potential community orchards and small woodlands.**

Councillor Walpole updated the Parish Council on the Kent Tree Plan and made enquiries with the owners of Beech Court Gardens on the Tree Fund. Awaiting to hear back from the owners.

The Parish Council resolved to publicise the Kent Plan Tree to private land owners.

Relevant Legislation: Inclosure Act 1845; Small Holdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.34

**Public Participation**

A member of the public offered to join the community speed watch team.

A member of the public raised neighbours’ concern of motor bikes speeding through the village and events at the Stag. Currently tolerable but to alert the Parish Council if the problem escalates. Raise concerns about the use of the field as an overspill car park. Setting a precedent, not being policed, other members of the public using the field, liability insurance, restricted covenant to use the field. Councillor Aitken – Given assurances the field would be marshalled. There have been two occasions where the field was used maximum of 6 vehicles. Liaise with The Stag owners of events and cross reference with village hall events and cricket matches. There is no restricted covenant on the leases regarding the use of the field for car parking.

Vice-Chairperson Cllr Thomas commented this is not a parish council matter and is between the Leaseholders.

Clerk – Conflict between the two parties, the Parish Council can act as mediator.

Councillor Walpole suggested meeting up with the owners of the Stag to discuss parishioners’ concerns.

Relevant Legislation: Local Government Act, s 100.

**Items to be placed on the next Agenda**

Any items to be emailed to: clerk@challockparishcouncil.gov.uk no later than Tuesday,11th July 2023.

**Next Meeting -** 20th July 2023

**Future Parish Meeting Dates:**

Thursday, 21st September

Thursday, 19th October

Thursday, 23rd November

**Meeting Closed 21.10 pm.**

**Signed as a true record by: ……………………………Tracy Brown Chairperson Challock Parish Council**

**Dated……………………**