

Aylesford Parish Council

Annual Meeting of the Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 May 2021

Present: Councillors Shelley (Chairman), Balcombe, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ludlow, Hammond, Mrs Papagno, Smith, Sullivan, Winnett, Walker and Williams.

In Attendance: Mrs Randall (Acting Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer)

Others: Borough and County Councillor Kennedy.

Apologies: Councillors Base, Beadle, Ms Oyewusi, Rillie and Wright.

1. **Declarations of Interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

2. **Apologies for absence**

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Base (Holiday), Beadle (Work), Ms Oyewusi (Unwell), Rillie (Personal) and Wright (Unwell) were received, and the reasons for absence agreed.

3. **Election of Chairman of Council: Declaration of Acceptance of Office**

Councillor Thomas Shelley was proposed as Chairman by Councillor Balcombe and Seconded by Councillor Mrs Gadd. Councillor Shelley accepted the nomination with thanks and was unanimously elected.

Councillor Shelley made his Declaration of Acceptance of Office before the Acting Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

4. **Election of Vice-Chairman of Council**

Councillor John Balcombe was proposed as Vice Chairman by Councillor Smith and Seconded by Councillor Wright. Councillor Balcombe was unanimously elected.

5. **Casual Vacancies**

Current Vacancies - Aylesford South 1.

6. **Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 16 March 2021**

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

7. **Matters Arising from the previous minutes**

There were no Matters Arising.

8. **Chairman's Announcements**

Attached at Appendix A at the end of these minutes.

9. **Adjournment of the meeting to allow for public participation**

There were no Members of the Public present.

10. **Annual Return 2020-21**

The Annual Return for 2020/21 Sections 1 and 2 were submitted to all Members.

10.1 Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2020/21

The Acting Clerk explained that the Council is not able to answer Yes to all assertions for the following reasons:

Assertion 4 – an error had been made regarding the date for the Exercise of Public Rights for the 2019/20 Financial Year. There should be a period of 30 days in which the public can request to view the Year End documents, the Exercise of Public Rights was dated 13 June 2020 however members did not approve the Annual Accounts until 28 July 2020 therefore the 30-day period had already passed. The Council was advised to contact the external auditor PKF Littlejohn for an explanation regarding the issue around the Exercise of Public Rights, but did not do this.

Assertion 7 - matters brought to the Council's attention by the internal auditor in respect of reviewing the Asset Register and ungrouping some items so they are individually listed in the register had not been actioned.

The Council **Agreed** the document for submission to the External Auditor.

10.2 Section 2, Accounting Statements 2020-21

Members then considered Section 2 Accounting Statements for 2020/21 and **Agreed** the document for submission to the External Auditor

11. To Receive the report of the County Councillor

Councillor Kennedy started by congratulating Councillor Shelley on his appointment as Chairman. He continued by thanking the Council for helping last year by making a financial contribution to the food delivery service he set up and will not forget the kindness shown to him by this Parish Council. He is a huge supporter of Parish's as they are in the heart of their communities and know more than anyone what's going on in their area. It is them who supply hanging baskets, flowers, benches, open spaces, play areas etc to make their Parish's more enjoyable for their residents and they are far more efficient than the Borough or indeed the County Council's. Councillor Kennedy reiterated that he will always help with any problems, questions or complaints, no-one must hesitate to contact him.

Councillor Smith asked if there was an update regarding the lorries parking on the slip road of the A229, Councillor Kennedy responded that unfortunately there is not. TMBC refuse to police the parking there as a member of staff was once assaulted and there are no parking restrictions to enforce. He has secured a review of the TMBC Parking Policies and will push KCC to provide more lorry parks as companies do not pay for their employees to stay in hotels.

Councillor Ludlow asked if the bulky waste service will restart any time soon, Councillor Kennedy answered that it was unlikely to due to the issues surrounding Urbaser. He wants to end the timed appointment slots at the tip and will be pushing for this to happen.

12. To Receive the report of the Borough Councillor

Councillor Williams reported that there are still issues with the waste services contractor Urbaser, with many unhappy residents and Councillors.

He informed members that due to the proposed introduction of parking charges in the TMBC owned car parks in Aylesford he will push for electric car charging points to be installed.

13. Committee Minutes

13.1 - It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 6 April 2021 be approved as a correct record.

13.2 - It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee meeting held on 4 May 2021 be approved as a correct record.

13.3 - It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 23 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

13.4 - It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Environmental Services Committee meeting held on 27 April 2021 be approved as a correct record.

14. Approval of the Terms of Reference of Sub Committees

It was **Agreed** to approve the Terms of Reference of Sub Committees.

15. Appointments to Committees

It was **Agreed** to approve the appointments to Sub Committees.

16. Appoint Representatives to Outside Bodies

It was Agreed that the following appointments be made to the outside bodies for 2021/22.

Aylesford Village Community Centre – Councillor Gledhill

Blue Bell Hill Village Hall – Vacancy

Tunbury Hall – Councillor Shelley

KALC – Councillor Shelley

TMBC Parish Partnership – Councillor Shelley

Rochester Airport – Councillor Shelley

United Charites of Burham – Councillor Smith

17. Account for Payment

The Council considered the Payment Schedule attached to the Agenda and Councillor Mrs Gadd proposed and Councillor Balcombe seconded and it was Agreed that 27 payments totalling £10,951.50 be made.

18. Any Other Business

There was no Any Other Business

19. Duration of Meeting

7.30pm to 8.20pm

Chairman's Announcements

Aylesford is a very beautiful and ancient part of Kent, full of photogenic scenes and vistas and monuments older than the Pyramids of Egypt, but I see a very challenging few years ahead.

The TMBC local plan seems to have failed, perhaps providing an opportunity to revise it, and the government seems to want to take planning away from local people and put it in the hands of developers and officials in central government. This is something I am totally against, not least because I believe in local decisions being democratically taken by local people, not faceless bureaucrats in some Soviet style planning office.

We have in the past constantly opposed over development, especially when it comes with no or inadequate infrastructure. If we are going to have to have lots more houses thrust upon us, we need to exert as much pressure as we can to get improved roads and transport, and in a time when all the significant political parties agree that we are facing major challenges if the World is not to endure a climate catastrophe, to ensure that any development is as environmentally friendly as possible.

To this end, I have been in a conversation with one of our local MPs, who reduced 9 pages of my ranting about what needs to be done in new developments to 6 sentences, which after further discussion with members of MERLin, a local grouping dedicated to developing the Medway Ecological Riverine Link, a walking/cycling environmental route along the Medway valley, I have expanded to 10.

I have been chosen by representatives of all the Parish Councils in TMBC to represent them on a new Climate Change Forum, set up by the Borough Council, and the first thing we are going to do is to survey them and find what they want.

I have also been chosen to be the deputy chairman of the Kent Community Rail Partnership. As a result of getting involved in this I quickly found that all 3 of our local stations, Aylesford, New Hythe and Barming, have access for the disabled and Mums with pushchairs on one platform but not the other. I can't say that Southeastern are rushing to remedy this deficiency but I am in the process of pressing them not to ignore it. In order to apply a little more leverage, I am now proposing that we start by 'adopting' Aylesford station, which will cost us the princely sum of £25, plus a certain amount of out time.

There are pressures all the time on our green spaces. Fortunately, we are blessed with quite a few of them that we actually own, but we have to constant resist any attempts to encroach on them and to ensure that the public can make best use of them

Tom Shelley