

Aylesford Parish Council

Environmental Services Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held in the Capel Morris Centre on 22 March 2022

Present: Councillor Ludlow (Chairman) and Councillors, Balcombe, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Eves, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Hammond, Mrs Ogun, Rillie, Shelley, Smith, Sharp, Sullivan, Williams and Winnett.

In Attendance: Melanie Randall (Clerk)

Apologies: Councillors Beadle, Fuller, Ms Oyewusi and Walker

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Beadle, Ms Oyewusi, Fuller and Walker were received, and the reason for absence agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 February 2022

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

4. Small Works Programme

The Clerk reported that work had now restarted and she was waiting for an update from the contractor regarding what has been done. **Ongoing**

5. Parking at the Upper Bell Slip Road

This item is covered under Agenda item 6 **Ongoing**

6. Highway Improvement Plan (HIP)

The Clerk reported that she had received further correspondence on two items as follows.

Forstal Road at entrance to Village – KCC is to fund HGV counts which will be commissioned in April 2022.

Blue Bell Hill Slip Road – KCC is to order suitable signage which is due to be ordered April 2022 for installation early Summer or to coincide with High-Speed Road closure annual works. **Ongoing**

7. Bus Services

7.1 155 Bus Service – The Clerk explained that she had received notification that Arriva have served notice on KCC to withdraw from their 155 contract and they will cease to operate the Wouldham to Maidstone part of the service from 17 April 2022. The decision has been made by Arriva on grounds of commercial profitability and not by KCC. There are a number of meetings planned between County Councillor Kennedy, Tracey Crouch MP and KCC to work on a solution. The Clerk will continue discussions with Councillor Kennedy who will report back to the Parish Office with further information as it becomes available. **Ongoing**

8. Gap between Ferryfield and Rugby Club

The Clerk reported that the installation of the gate has been put on hold until the early part of 2022. **Ongoing**

9. Floodlights in Old Bridge Gardens

The Clerk reported that the Council is still waiting for the repairs to be carried out under warranty. The Streetlighting Contractor has contacted the manufacturer for an update. **Ongoing**

10. Possible Salt Bins in Eccles

The Clerk reported that as requested at the last meeting she had contacted the County Member to ask if purchasing salt bins would be something he would fund through his Members Grant and had received a response. The County Councillor decided upon his election that his Combined Members Grant would only be spent on “community engagement” and not on items which should (or could) be provided by KCC, TMBC or the Parish Councils, in their statutory roles. Therefore; he is sorry but he would not sign off a request for any salt bins. **Closed**

11. Christmas Lights Review

The Clerk reported that as requested at the last meeting she has the quote to renew and replace the lights in the trees in Blue Bell Hill. The total cost is £4,195.00 (not including the

permit fee from KCC as the trees referenced to belong to them). The Clerk informed the Committee that there is not any money available in the budgets so if members wanted to proceed it would have to be taken from elsewhere within the budget, after discussion it was considered by all as too expensive and as there is no available budget it was proposed by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor Sullivan that the quote be rejected. It was also **Unanimously Agreed** not to get any further quotes for these lights to be replaced. Furthermore; it was also **Agreed** that the Parish Council continue to purchase the Christmas Tree every year for the “Friends of Blue Bell Hill Village”

Closed

12. Arch Lights on the Old Bridge Aylesford – Review

The Clerk informed the Committee that she had received an update regarding the arch lights on the Old Bridge and was in receipt of an estimate to carry out some investigative and repair works. Only the centre arch and the one to the left are currently working. The estimate is £800 and includes labour, an electrician, two new transformers and three rectifiers. There is no guarantee all the arches will fully work again until the above works are carried out. While on site the power, transformers and in-line rectifiers will all be raised yet again in a bid not to become submerged under water.

After discussion it was **Agreed** to proceed with the work needed. The Clerk will report back with the outcome after the works have been completed.

Ongoing

13. Aylesford Football Club Easter Holiday Request

A request has been received from the Aylesford Football Club to sue Forstal Recreation Ground on 6th, 7th, 13th and 14th April 2022 from 9am to 4pm to provide an Easter Holiday Club for the children. It was **Agreed** to permit the use of the Recreation Ground as requested subject to the usual stipulations.

Closed

14. Use of Coronation gardens for Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations

A request has been received to use Coronation Gardens, Aylesford for the Queens Platinum Jubilee Celebrations on 5 June 2022 from 12 noon to approx. 7pm. Set up will be required 3-4 days prior to the event and the school have no issue with this.

It was **Agreed** to permit the use of Coronation Gardens as requested subject to the usual stipulations.

Closed

15. Allotment Regulations – Review

The Clerk informed the committee that a review of the allotment regulations was needed and the newly formed Aylesford Allotment Committee had made some suggestions to the revised draft regulations which the Clerk had incorporated where possible while adhering to the Allotments Act. The allotment committee have requested that dogs be permitted onto the allotment plot, kept on a lead. Currently dogs are not permitted on site but the allotment committee feel that if they were it would encourage those with dogs to attend more regularly as they could take them with them. Members raised concerns around fouling, noise, the pre-

school and primary school children (who both have plots), the potential danger if dogs escape their leads. It was therefore unanimously **Agreed** that the current rule is applied and no dogs are permitted on either allotment site at any time, repeated failure to comply may result in the Council issuing a Notice to Quit. The Clerk was asked to include some rules around the lighting of bonfires on site and after a few minor amendments it was unanimously **Agreed** to accept the new regulations. **Closed**

16. Bee-Keeping on Aylesford Allotments

The Clerk reported that a new plot holder would like to keep Bees on his allotment, as he is a bee-keeper. The office had contacted all allotment holders to seek if anyone has an allergy to bee stings. There are 40 plot holders and of those that replied two stated they had an allergy. The new plot holder is due to give a talk at the end of the month to fellow plot holders about bee-hives and after some discussion it was **Agreed** that the Council wait to see what the outcome of that is. The Clerk suggested that permission could be granted for one bee-hive for a trial period of six months; if the majority of plot holders (who have responded) are in support, subject to receiving the relevant risk assessment and insurance documents from the plot holder. A few concerns were raised and the Clerk will need to seek some advice for clarification and may need to report back to this committee for a decision, however if that is not necessary the Clerk is authorised to grant permission as indicated above. **Closed**

17. Any Other Correspondence

Councillor Ludlow offered congratulations to Councillor Beadle for organising humanitarian aid for the Ukraine and taking it to Poland.

Councillor Fuller having given his apologies for this meeting asked the Clerk to inform members that Aylesford Football Club are playing in the Maidstone Cup Final at the Gallagher Stadium Friday 25 March 2022 if anyone would like to attend to support them. Entry is £5, U16's are free. Kick-off is at 19:45, arrive from 18:30 and Councillors are asked to let Councillor Fuller know direct if they are attending.

Councillor's Hammond and Williams reported that sadly the Tommy Soldier on the Aylesford Village sign has been damaged, possibly by the KCC mower so they will replace it with another one that they are purchasing with their own personal money.

18. Duration of Meeting

7.33pm to 8.12pm