

WEALD PARISH COUNCIL

MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13th MARCH, 2024
AT 7.15 P.M. in the MEMORIAL HALL

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs R Wood (in the Chair), Mrs L Harris, Mrs C Beddoe, Mr R Trapp, Mrs R Hewett, and Mr S Brennan.

Also attending were District Councillor Thornton, County Councillor McArthur, the clerk and twelve members of the public.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** - Mr R Brunner and District Councillor Hogarth
2. **DECLARATION OF INTEREST** – there was none.
3. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON the 17th January, 2024** – these were approved and signed by the Chairman.
4. **MATTERS ARISING**

(1) Memorial Hall Field - News

The clerk officially notified the Council of the purchase of the Memorial Hall Field. The Field was transferred to the Parish Council's ownership on the 18th January, 2024.

(2) Recreation Ground Modernization – An Update

Mrs Hewett reported that all major works are now complete.

(3) Hubbards Hill Closure

The timetable of works on the bridge continues to change. Work on the bridge is expected to re-start in early April and to be completed by the end of the month.

The above is the best information received to-date by the Parish Council and may therefore be subject to change later. The Parish Council will provide any new information it receives via its website and on social media.

(4) Next Litter Pick

As previously advised the next Litter Pick will take place on Saturday 16th March from 10.30 to 11.30 a.m. Volunteers are invited for a free tea/

coffee and cake at the Community Shop after the pick. A further pick will take place on Saturday 11th May.

(5) Weald's 20 mph speed zone

In response to various complaints that the 20-mph zone is not been observed the clerk invited Kent Police to set up ad hoc speed checks in the village to encourage compliance. Kent Police declined and encouraged our local Speed Watch Group (to be established) to man these checks. Kent Police will provide training to the volunteers that sign up to the Group.

(6) D-Day 80th Event

Following the agreed national timetable Weald's beacon will be lit at 9.15 pm on the 6th June and the International Tribute spoken by the Chairman and invited members of the public.

Members of the Weald's Amateur Pantomime Society will perform music and songs made famous during WW2.

The Windmill will be invited to put on a special menu on the night and in the run up to the 6th.

Members of the public will be invited send in their family memories of D-Day and on Weald during wartime. These will be posted on the PC's website and on the village newsletter.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

Circulated to members.

6. PLANNING

Details of current planning applications are available on the Parish Council website.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Meeting adjourned at 7.45 p.m. and resumed at 7.50 p.m.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Allotments Committee reported that the bid for funds to erect Deer Fencing around the perimeter of the allotments had been successful.

These funds, plus funds from the Committee itself, should cover the bulk

of the cost of the fencing. The Committee may therefore request a

contribution from the Parish Council once the final costings are provided.

The Parish Council expressed concern about the latest incident on Gracious Lane Bridge and the spate of recent accidents on the A21. This concern has been addressed to National Highways, Kent Highways, KCC and our MP.

Cllr McArthur has since advised that she has attended a ministerial meeting in Whitehall where she raised the topic of the recent incident with National Highways and she received assurances that this matter is in hand.

The clerk advised that an Expression of Interest had been submitted to The Community Energy Fund to raise funding for a feasibility study into the proposed village-wide low carbon energy scheme. A formal application for funding will be submitted later in the year.

Cllr McArthur briefed the Council on matters in her portfolios:

KCC is struggling to fund an increasing number of unaccompanied children living in the County. KCC is looking for additional support from Central Government.

Due to financial constraints bus services in the County are under severe pressure which could lead to school buses being reduced.

Cllr McArthur demonstrated the “bag for life” that SDC is introducing to replace the free recycling bags that are currently available.

The Chairman reported that in line with the clerk’s contract, his salary should be reviewed at the end of March. The Chairman advised that she and the Vice Chairman had met with the clerk in their capacity as members of the Finance Committee and wished to recommend to the full Council an increase in the clerk’s salary to reflect national minimum wage levels and to put the clerk more on par with equivalent clerks.

Some members of the Council objected to this being raised without prior notice and without explanation of how the increased salary was determined. It was agreed that a decision of the clerk’s salary should be deferred until further details are provided to all members of the Council. The matter will be reviewed at the next meeting of the Council.

The Meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.

