

# HACKINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF HACKINGTON PARISH ASSEMBLY  
HELD AT TYLER HILL MEMORIAL HALL  
AT 7.00pm ON THURSDAY 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017

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**Present:** Cllr. R Evison (Chairman); Cllr. A Cover; Cllr. T Hulks; Cllr. N Cronin and Mrs D Horswell (Clerk).

**Also present:** Ward Cllr. Amy Baker; County Cllr. John Simmonds and seven residents including Mrs Lynne Evison (Tree Warden) and Mrs Penny Whiting (Gazette Representative).

**Apologies for Absence:** Cllr. B Fitter-Harding (Vice-Chairman) - meeting; Ward Cllr. George Metcalfe - meeting; Mrs P Reilly (Chairman, Blean Hackington & Tyler Hill Society).

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the Parish Assembly.

## **(1) MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

The minutes of the 2016 Parish Assembly were agreed as being accurate and signed as such by the Chairman

## **(2) CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: Cllr. Evison**

The Chairman gave his Annual Report (printed below), of the Parish Council's work over the last year, copies of which have been circulated to all Councillors:

### **The Chairman of the Parish Council's report to the Parish Assembly, 9<sup>th</sup> March 2017**

The Council has met on its customary six occasions over the past year, managing particular matters pertaining to the parish as well as its usual business of oversight of the highways, footpaths, street lighting, safety and security, and the conservation area. It continues to enjoy good working relationships with other bodies serving the community in the parish.

During the year there have been continuing discussions over the prospect of devolution of services following a potential re-organisation of the two levels of governance above parish councils in the county. KALC has conducted preliminary discussions with the Leader of the County Council and representatives of District Councils but are waiting on decisions to be made by these bodies. In preparation for any possible change the Council has held discussions with neighbouring parish council representatives to assess whether any of the services which we provide could be done jointly. Until the form of any new governance has been approved by the Government any proposals from our discussions will remain 'under consideration'.

The Council has used its training budget to send the Clerk to training and updating conference and Cllr Hulks to a conference dealing with Resilience planning.

The Council is always represented at the Canterbury Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils and at the Rural Area Members Panel meetings of

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the City Council. At the latter, parish councillors are now permitted to speak. The Council awaits the publication of the revised version of the Parish Charter.

As ever, Highways and road traffic featured prominently in the Council's work. Thanks to the generous support of our County Councillor, John Simmonds, the Council had installed three poles or masts upon which a speed indicator device can be hung in four different positions. Two of the posts are on Hackington Road and one on Tyler Hill Road. Whilst the device does not record speeds it has been noticed that vehicles do slow down when the indicator flashes the vehicle's speed. Thus we are able to influence the speed of vehicles in the village without the need for Speedwatch operative teams being called out.

Parking close to the Tyler's Kiln pub has on occasions caused nuisance and inconvenience. As a result some residents have asked if yellow lines could be installed. The Council has applied for yellow lines to be installed appropriately and the District Council has proposed they be installed on the north side of Link Road from the junction with Hackington Road to the western boundary of No 5 Link Road.

The financing of all the services that the parish council offers to our electors has come under increasing pressure due to the Government imposed reductions in funding as part of its austerity plan. The reductions so far, together with the projected decreases in funding in the years up to 2020 have caused the Council to consider very carefully how the present services can be maintained. The Council has concluded that our annual precept on ratepayers will have to increase by slightly more than it has in the past; In fact by 7% in the coming financial year, which is approximately 60p/ week for a Band D property. The council has always been prudent in its management of our finances and it will continue to be so, but will need to be realistic if it is to continue to serve our residents properly.

Litter, especially beside Calais Hill, but also on the other roadsides of Hackington Road, Canterbury Hill and Tyler Hill Road continues to cause us concern. It has been noticed that litter is particularly evident close to properties with absentee landlords and student occupation. The Council will take up this issue with the City Council. As part of a county-wide clear up the Council was recently involved in bringing the village into good order again and will invest in notices promoting the taking home of all litter and keeping our neighbourhood tidy.

The Parish has again enjoyed a year in which there were very few crimes committed and the Council is grateful to Robin Whiting for his continuing work as Neighbourhood Watch reporter for the village. Our PCSO meets with our Clerk regularly and is pleased to note that his active service has not been required in the village.

The Parish Council has considered several planning applications during the year. Most of the applications were processed in a straight-forward, uncontentious manner but one matter continues to cause some concern. The resubmission of a planning application at Hillside Cottage for a semi-detached building rather than a single accommodation was opposed by the Council on the grounds of over

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intensification more than a year ago but no decision has yet been received on this matter.

We are pleased to note that planning applications refer to our Design Statement which summarises our expectations of those who are seeking to change buildings, add to buildings, or create new buildings in the parish. In almost all instances the applications acknowledge the importance of our Conservation Area status and the advice in the Design Statement

The Council continues to welcome commentary on the Design Statement. The text is available on the Parish Council's website

[www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk](http://www.hackingtonpc.kentparishes.gov.uk).

The Council was last year informed that along with all other areas designated as Conservation Areas in the district it will have its status reviewed and has been provisionally been placed in a category that questions whether it should continue to have such status. Nothing further has been heard of the review

The Tyler Hill Meadow Local Nature Reserve has again benefited from the voluntary efforts of the management team and some of their families who have tidied the Reserve. During the year a team from the Kentish Stour Project returned to the Reserve to undertake a substantial clear-up of all parts of the Reserve which is now restored to its former appearance. There continues to be regular surveys of birds, butterflies and moths, flowers and grasses, trees, dormice and the pond. The Management Team continue to look for local people to join in the maintenance of the Reserve.

Footpaths in and across the parish continue to be very well used. The footpaths to the east, which are mainly in our woods, continue to be well used and are in a good condition. The bridge over the Sarre Penn on footpath CB37 has been replaced and several trees downed in high winds have been removed. The Footpath system is in good shape overall.

The Council has placed the following documents on its website:

The Parish Design Statement is available for scrutiny and commentary.

A document called 'Who we are and what we do' is a statement about the Parish Council's constitution and activities.

Agendas and Minutes of all Parish Council meetings

Minutes of the management committee for the Tyler Hill Meadow Reserve.

The Annual Report to the Parish Assembly.

The Council undertakes an annual assessment of the risks to which it might be vulnerable and it confirms that the necessary insurance it has obtained covers the eventualities that might have to be met.

Members of the Council again wish to record their thanks to the Clerk, Mrs Denise Horswell, for the efficient, considerate and very pleasant way she continues to deal with all her responsibilities.

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The Council again wishes to thank and congratulate all those members of the community who have generously given their time and efforts to enhance the appearance of the village in the flower beds at the junction of Hackington Road and Summer Lane, on the 'village green' near the village sign, around the entrance to the Memorial hall and in the attractive 'Greening' projects.

During the year the Parish Councillors have taken the following lead responsibilities

Footpaths	Ray Evison
Highways	Ben Fitter
Street Lighting + Security	Nigel Cronin
Liaison with KALC and Memorial Hall	Annie Cover
Conservation	Trish Hulks

The Council is grateful for the advice it receives from the Chairman of B, H & T H Society, Penny Reilly, and from the Tree and Pond Warden, Lynne Evison

RE  
8th March 2017

Cllr. Cronin commented that the University Master plan is up for review and that it is a relative significant issue.

### **(3) County Cllr. And Ward Cllrs. Reports:**

#### **Ward councillor report:**

The past year at Canterbury City Council has been overshadowed by continuing merger talks as reductions in government funding start to reach their natural conclusion. The four year funding deal we reached with Parish Councils, in no small part due to their realistic and productive approach to the issue of Concurrent Function Funding, has largely sheltered them from further cuts at the current time, but once a merger decision is reached this will undoubtedly be a matter of focus once again.

The district Local Plan is on course for approval and adoption in mid to late 2017, and it largely preserves and protects Hackington in its current form. The University of Kent's development of a new Master Plan, however, continues to be a concern, potentially having significant consequences for both Blean and Tyler Hill, and I am personally monitoring developments very closely. I have made it clear to the Planning department that simply folding proposals in to the Council's policies will not be acceptable and will continue to push for thorough challenge and consultation to ensure any resulting Master Plan that is recognised by the district is robust and fair. The University continues to engage and I am optimistic about the outcome.

Blean Forest ward councillors continue to enjoy a positive relationship with their counterparts on Hackington Parish Council and we hope that this will continue. We would also like to give special thanks to Ray and Denise for their attendance at the Rural Area Member Panel, ensuring that Hackington's issues and the issues of Parish Councils in general are kept current on the city council's agenda.

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## **County Cllr. Report:**

County Cllr. John Simmonds reported that £2billion has been found by the Government to help with the huge gap in Social Care. KCC had already increased Council Tax by 1.99% plus the social care charge. As the Council Tax bills had already been sent out it is being carried over for future years.

## **(4) NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH REPORT:**

Cllr. Cronin reported that nothing significant had happened in Tyler Hill on the security angle. A resident commented on the theft of the tree and Christmas lights from the pub. The incident had been recorded on the pub's CCTV system.

## **(5) STREET LIGHTING REPORT:**

Cllr. Cronin reported that very few incidents had been reported and all had been resolved quickly.

Cllr. Simmonds said that the lights should be changed to LED by the end of the year. Residents can report any faults on street lights and other highway issues on the KCC website [www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel](http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel)

## **(6) PLANNING REPORT: Clerk** **Planning Report 2016/2017**

There have been 13 planning applications received in 2016/2017 of which HPC had no objections although several concerns were raised. All have been granted by CCC. 56 Hackington Road submitted two revisions to the original application (two were refused and the final application has now been granted).

Two planning applications from the previous year were granted (13 Calais Hill & Play Equipment on the recreation ground).

### Appeals:

Hillside Cottage which had been GRANTED permission for one detached dwelling but had put in another application for a pair of semi-detached in January 2016 to which HPC objected to. This was refused and the applicants lodged an appeal which is still pending.

3 Link Road had been REFUSED by CCC and the applicant had put in an APPEAL. HPC uphold the grounds for objection that they lodged previously. The appeal has been Dismissed by the Planning Inspector.

Cllr. Evison said that, in the future, Parish \Councils will be giving the decisions on small matters.

## **(7) ACCOUNTS REPORT: Clerk** **Accounts Report 2016/2017**

Following the Internal Audit, the Annual Return & Statement of Assurance for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 were approved and recorded by resolution by the Council (minuted 14.3 and 14.4 - 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016) prior to sending to the Audit Commission.

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The Annual Return was returned approved by the Audit Commission with the comment that the Annual Return was in accordance with proper practices – Minute item 10.5 dated 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016.

Concurrent Funding received from CCC for the year 2016/2017 was £2,518.88 (of which, THHMC received £1,645.28 for the upkeep of the recreation ground.

The remaining £873.60 was for the Parish Council to pay for the grass cutting on Tyler Hill Green, Grassed area/Calais Hill/Wood Hill and upkeep of Nature Reserve.

Concurrent Funding Function bid submitted for:

2017/2018 is £3,385

2018/2019 is £3,045

2019/2020 is £3,055

2020/2021 is £3,065

These figures include the hall's application for the upkeep of the recreation ground and £100 per year for the maintenance of the new bus shelter.

This is now a four-year application for 2017 – 2021. Depending on the decisions made, each parish will receive between 58.86% and 67.05% of the core functions applied for plus any ring-fenced funding for bus shelters.

Funding Agreement:

In January 2016 the Best Value review recommended that the District Council creates a Service Level Agreement for funding for 2017-18 to 2020-21. Following discussion with legal services, a draft funding agreement was sent out to all parish clerks in early June inviting feedback and the agreement was also discussed with parish councils where meetings took place. As a result a number of amendments have been made to the original version of the document and the final version of the funding agreement is on its way to us now for signing.

The Hall committee now put in their own bid to CCC for hall expenses.

Precept

Precept received for 2016/2017 was £5,683.75 of which £333.75 was the grant allocation from the government.

At the 15<sup>th</sup> November (item 9.3) meeting it was agreed to set the precept for 2017/2018 to £5,944.88 of which £166.88 is the Government grant.

Grants received:

KCC – Grant for installation of bus shelter - £2,000.00

CCC – RAAC – Queens 90<sup>th</sup> Celebration - £333.39 which was donated to THHMC who were organising the event.

Vat refund 2015/2016: £1,239.73

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Cllr. Evison said that some parishes are challenged if they have raised their precepts but there have been no such comments from our residents.

## **(8) FOOTPATHS REPORT: Cllr. Evison**

Cllr. Evison reported that all the footpaths are well used and in a good state. We have a good service from PROW team.

A resident that there is a bridge made out of a few boughs of trees through Honey Wood. An application has been made to PROW but it would need major construction and it is not a high priority. Cllr. Evison said that PROW have a small budget with lots of footpaths across the county needing to be repaired.

A resident asked whether a bridge could be made ourselves. Cllr. Cronin said that it would have to be good and perhaps it could be discussed at the next Parish Council meeting.

A resident raised the matter of motorcycles riding across land, Cllr. Evison said that the University had put up fences and styles making it so that they cannot access Hackington fields.

## **(9) HIGHWAYS REPORT: Cllr. Fitter-Harding**

Cllr. Fitter-Harding had sent the following report:

### **Highways Report**

Whilst highways matters continue to present pressing concerns for residents and the Parish Council, this year has been marked by the successful installation of the village's second flashing speed sign. This sign is helpfully relocatable to multiple sites, giving maximum coverage and helping to keep it effective over the long term.

As such, speedwatch is largely dormant at the moment, but sufficient volunteers exist to perform ad-hoc speed checks when desired.

The adhesion of 30mph indicator stickers to wheelie bins presents motorists with an impressive regular reminder to curtail their speed. In my view this initiative has been very successful and there is anecdotal evidence of people having seen the sheer number of them and taken note.

There is limited further potential for speed reducing measures in the village. However, it would be advisable to perform another speed check in the coming year so that the data can advise any future strategy.

The surface condition of the roads and pavements in Hackington parish remains otherwise acceptable. Issues are reported via the Kent County Council online tool and are mostly attended to promptly. The parish continues to benefit from a productive relationship with both KCC Highways and KCC councillor John Simmonds, and their continued attention is greatly appreciated.

The Parish has also been increasingly involved in parking restrictions, liaising with Canterbury City Council. This is largely due to the continued success of the village pub, but other issues have also required the council's intervention. Parking restrictions in rural areas are often an unpleasant addition to the street scene, and so finding an appropriate balance is likely to continue to be an issue in the coming year.

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As always please continue to make highways-related matters known to myself and the clerk so that we can keep improving Hackington for the good of its residents. A resident commented that the footpath is dreadful on the even numbered side of Hackington Road. Cllr. Evison said that he reported it to KCC in November 2016 that it is unacceptable and needed replacement.

## **(9) KALC REPORT: Cllr. Cover**

Cllr. Cover reported that it has again been a busy year with the regular quarterly meeting still being held at our own village hall. During the last 12 months there has again been serious concern with the ongoing problems of the lack of a lorry park which during the year has caused congestion on the roads in our area.

At the last meeting in January the guest speaker was Mark Arnold, Divisional Commander for Canterbury, who gave us a pretty good in depth report on the concerns arising from the 999 calls and the priority on how calls are dealt with. Issues were also raised over the lack of P.C.S.O's now in rural areas and the fact they no longer attend our P.C. meetings. – we haven't seen ours for many meetings now! Sadly, they no longer have the time to come to the meetings but we were assured they do make regular visits to rural areas.

Other matters that are always of concern within K.A.L.C. for all villages relate to the speed of traffic on rural roads which is something that is continually being monitored at our meeting, together with rural crime and planning issues.

The chairman of our K.A.L.C. branch is of course our own chairman, Cllr. Ray Evison, who does keep us fully informed of all matters relating to the numerous meetings he attends during the course of the year.

The next local K.A.L.C. Canterbury area branch meeting is on 19<sup>th</sup> April when Simon Cook, Leader of CCC, will be the speaker.

All meetings are open to the public.

## **(10) CONSERVATION AREA: Cllr. Hulks**

Cllr. Hulks reported that hopefully the matter of the yellow van in the car park will be resolved soon. The Officer has assured Cllr. Hulks that she would not let the matter drop and it will be removed. Cllr. Hulks read out an email from EKH from 2012 saying that no unlicensed vehicle would be allowed on their land.

The main areas of concern with planning applications are Hillside Cottage and 3 Link Road.

Cllr. Evison spoke about the document that has been circulated concerning the forthcoming review of the Conservation Areas in the District as CCC can't look after them all.

It has been stated that some do not deserve to be Conservation Areas, some are going to be subject to a review (includes Hackington) and the rest have a very good reason for being Conservation Areas.

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Cllr. Hulks said that Tyler Hill Meadow is still under-used and it would be nice if more schools used it. A pond survey had taken place when Alpine Newts were discovered which are not to be encouraged. There are still no signs of any dormice.

## **Greening Project update: Cllr. Hulks**

The remaining money from the grant will be used to pay the difference to replace the sign-post at the bottom of Calais Hill with a traditional one. KCC has agreed in principal and Mike Goggin has given details of the preferred proposed position of the sign to KCC. Cllr. Hulks has asked Gardeners whether anyone wants to take on the flower-bed at the junction of Summer Lane and Hackington Road.

There is a suggestion to have planters put either side of the new bus shelter.

## **(11) MEMORIAL HALL REPORT: Cllr. Cover**

We have had another pretty good year with hires, especially with the regular users of the hall which is encouraging as we need to raise much needed funds to carry out improvement work including the roof and other areas. As always, we are very aware that without the band of willing villagers who give their time to do work at the hall it would cost us a lot more. This includes the ground works as well as building. As hoped bonfire night was a good fund raiser although it is getting more difficult each year with the tighter rules and regulations that are brought in. Again, we are lucky we have such a good team of people who keep up to date with the regulations that are brought in.

There have been some incidents of motor cycles being driven on the recreation ground and through the woods which is very worrying and these have been reported to the police.

We are hoping to get some grant funding to help with new play equipment and other work that we need both on the recreation ground and in the hall itself. As everyone knows the new seat around the tree has been installed in memory of Hazel McCabe and it is proving to be very popular and we think is an attractive addition to the seating around the ground. Another bench similar in design to Hazel's is to be put on the ground in memory of Stephen Hambrook.

We had a 'Clean for the Queen' morning on Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> March which was a success and with an early start we nearly beat the rain that started later in the morning. It is hoped other events will take place during the year to commemorate her 90<sup>th</sup> year so watch our notice boards and/or website for information and dates.