

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Friday 20 September 2021 in Westbere Village Hall at 6.30pm.

Present: Parish Councillors: Paul Glover (elected as Chairman at the meeting), Sylvia Harlow (elected as Vice Chairman at the meeting, Kathy Wilson and Ken Dekker.
Canterbury City Councillor Standards Board Cllr Anne Dekker (Guest speaker)
Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.
3 members of the public (for part of the meeting).

51. Election of Chairman

The Clerk explained that usually the outgoing Chairman would take this item but as Cllr G Glover had given apologies the Clerk invited nominations for a new Chairman. Cllr Wilson proposed Cllr P Glover and this was seconded by Cllr Harlow. Cllr P Glover was happy to accept the position and duly signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

52. Election of Vice Chairman

Cllr P Glover then asked for nominations for a vice chairman. Cllr Wilson nominated Cllr Harlow and this was seconded by Cllr Dekker. Cllr Harlow was happy to accept the position.

53. Chairman's welcome

Cllr P Glover welcomed everyone to the meeting and reiterated that although the meeting was open to the public it is not a public meeting. The adjournment would allow 15 minutes to take any members of the public's items.

54. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Canterbury City Councillors: Georgina Glover, Rachel Carnac and Louise Harvey-Quirke, and from Kent County Cllr Alan Marsh

55. Guest Speaker - Canterbury City Councillor Standards Board Cllr Anne Dekker

Cllr P Glover introduced Canterbury City Councillor Standards Board Cllr, Anne Dekker, who gave a short presentation on the Code of Conduct and Standards of public office.

Cllr A Dekker offered thanks to the parish council for allowing her to attend. She explained she has several functions at CCC – she is ward councillor for Herne and Broomfield, Sheriff of Canterbury, Chief Whip for the ruling party and Cllr for Standards. She is responsible for members from all the 27 district parish councils and all the CCC Councillors. She works closely with the CCC Monitoring Officer and Legal department.

The Standards Committee has cross-party membership and has three scrutinisers. The committee may look at Member questionable behaviours such as around procedures, councillor actions, and councillor interaction with members of the public.

Key points Cllr A Dekker mentioned were that 70% of parish councillors are co-opted rather than elected and the majority of them putting themselves forward do so with the best of intentions. Once elected a councillor should make sure they know the rules of governance – the Standing Orders guide and instruct the parish council – and a parish council must adhere legally to its governance for lawful decision. A councillor should make decisions after debate; that debate should be free debate without ridicule; that no individual councillor has any more authority than any other councillor; and must not act alone or make a decision as an individual councillor, and realise that the position is not like a local club but is within the first tier of government.

For the Code of Conduct the “Nolan Principles” are followed:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

Cllr A Dekker commented that she believed respect for fellow members should also be included on the list. Reports of bullying and intimidation are on the increase. Tolerance should also be added to the list above.

Cllr A Dekker explained that training helps, for both new and experienced councillors. She reminded everyone that a parish councillor is making decisions on how to spend public money. The sector is constantly changing and updating.

She reminded everyone that parish councils are non-political and a councillor must strive to be open-minded and receptive and not pre-determined. A councillor is part of a team to enhance lives and communities, but not everyone is going to agree with everyone else.

Cllr A Dekker explained that anyone may speak to anyone in Standards at CCC and contact may be made via the Clerk.

Cllr P Glover thanked Cllr A Dekker and moved back to the agenda.

56. Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

None

57. Minutes of the last meeting held 20 August 2021

Cllr K Dekker abstained from the approval as he had not been present at the meeting. Cllr P Glover, Cllr Wilson and Cllr Harlow approved the Minutes as a true record of the meeting.

58. Chairman's Report and Councillors' Reports

CCC Cllr Harvey-Quirke - Cllr Harvey-Quirke had given apologies but the following report from her was circulated prior to the meeting and Cllr P Glover read it to the meeting:

Canterbury City Councillor Report – Westbere Parish Council, Monday 20th September, 2021.

Good Evening,

Apologies for missing you this evening on your first meeting as a newly formed Council.

I wish you all the very best for this evening's meeting, and the ones that follow.

Following the summer recess, committee meetings and councillor briefings have now resumed. This week, I'll be attending both JTB and Community committee meetings, and two councillor briefings.

In the last week, an urgent decision has been made for Canenco to take on the grounds maintenance and associated works contract from our current provider, Serco, on 30 November 2021. I am aware that Westbere PC had previously had discussions with Georgina about taking over the maintenance of the land adjacent to Pennington Close. It may be the right time to revisit that conversation, and I'm happy to help you and Georgina, if you need me.

I have been alerted to a problem with the clinical waste collections. My understanding is that any missed clinical collections should be reported to Cancenco, and bins left out for a rescheduled collection. However, if there are any issues with this, please contact me, and I will take the matter to the relevant officers.

The survey on changes to the Governance System is live on the CCC website. For anyone wishing to share views on the proposed Cabinet system, please complete this survey by 22nd October.

You may be aware that, due to low demand, the Park & Ride service from Sturry Road was temporarily suspended back in July. There has been an update on this; from 20th September, the service will resume and will be running as before, which is good news.

The Beaney is appealing for any unwanted Lego compatible bricks for a special Christmas project. Any donations can be handed in at the museum's visitor information desk until Sunday 26th September.

I look forward to seeing you very soon.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Louise Harvey-Quirke

Sturry ward Canterbury City Councillor

59. Canterbury City Councillor, Cllr Georgina Glover report

Cllr P Glover read Cllr G Glover's report to the meeting:

"I have to isolate prior to my husband going into hospital tomorrow.

I would like to wish the new Westbere Parish Council all the very best, I look forward to its first Newsletter.

Louise's report was very like one I would have produced and covers the main CCC issues, I don't sit on Community but cover Regeneration instead and we are not meeting yet. The biggest issue for CCC is the budget, balanced for 2021-2022 but very short of balancing for 2022-2023. I have a waste briefing this week and will forward any notes to you for circulation to the WPC councillors.

You will have covered all of the Community Engagement Meeting.

I will forward the briefing notes on the Stodmarsh and the NPPF briefing as soon as I receive them.

I chased up the Dog Notifications and was told that they were still not available and you have received an apology.

In respect of the Pennington Close Green Area, I am of the opinion that I consider it beneficial to allow the transfer of the contract to take place and then find out what is reported on the contract transfer. I am afraid to rock the boat and find it is something we will have to pay for, it is cut very regularly and looks nice and I am afraid, the village green is not cut to the same specification, the Church Yard is looking very rough."

Cllr Georgina Glover

The Clerk explained that she had tried to ring the grounds maintenance contractor that day about the churchyards and left a message for him to call her to discuss. Cllr Wilson commented that the weather this year has caused an abnormal increase in growth of vegetation this season, and Cllr Harlow agreed with this.

60. Parish Councillor reports

Cllr Kathy Wilson

Cllr Wilson explained that her role with Neighbourhood Watch at Herne Bay Police Station is to change as her availability has changed and she may move department. She is still on the Canterbury and District Neighbourhood Watch committee and will send out alerts.

Cllr Wilson advised that within Cllr G Glover's report above, she agrees with Cllr G Glover about Pennington Close and stated that she did not want any changes. Land ownership of the area in question is still unestablished.

Cllr Sylvia Harlow

Cllr Harlow advised that she has started the KMBR wildlife record again.

61. Adjournment of the meeting

The three residents present included the Community Champion for the faster broadband project that has been ongoing for about a year now. They explained that the three of them had made headway over the year and worked with Openreach and communicated the government voucher scheme to households to ask residents to pledge their vouchers. KCC has a top up voucher scheme for some properties of £1000 per property. Around 60 properties have signed up. Estimated build cost is £148k. Without a contract they need to raise around 30% more than this in case of drop out. This equates to about 30 more properties. However, a resident advised that KCC has given them a deadline of December 2021. They explained there is a contract option to take out a contract with Openreach at the lower build figure. But it needs a body to undertake an underwriting for those who don't sign up. The residents suggested that the parish council could help parishioners and sign the contract. COVID has changed households' needs with work from home and school home learning and streaming on the increase. They asked that this be added to the next parish council meeting agenda for a decision.

Cllr P Glover asked if getting the additional 30 homes required to pledge was achievable and a resident confirmed yes, but there was a risk of not getting there before December.

The residents confirmed they will stay committed and keep in contact with all residents. The Clerk explained a newsletter to all households was planned in about two weeks' time and the residents agreed to write an update article for inclusion in it.

The residents then left the meeting at this point.

The meeting continued.

62. Planning

CCC's Call for sites

CCC launched a new Local Plan Call for Sites on 18 May 2021 to identify sites for housing to 2040. There is no update yet on the CCC's Call for Sites and options for the Canterbury District Local Plan to 2040.

NOTED that KCC has granted the Sturry Link Road application. Work is scheduled to begin on this £30m 0.9 mile bypass in autumn 2023 and end in the summer of 2025.

NOTED the next joint meeting of Sturry, Fordwich and Westbere representatives re the Bretts site is on 04 October 2021 at 7pm in Fordwich Town Hall. Cllrs P Glover, Harlow, Wilson and the Clerk will all attend this one.

NOTED that a property in Westbere Lane by the village green had to put sandbags out again in the last few days for fear of a risk of flooding – having flooded during very heavy rainfall in August 2021. The resident has logged a report with Kent County Council to get the drains cleansed and contacted the parish council to ask that the roads be swept as the leaves and debris on the roads clog up the drains. The Clerk will try and arrange this request.

New applications:

CA/21/01931 - Rosedene Cottage, Staines Hill, CT2 0ET

Two-storey detached dwelling with detached garage following demolition of existing dwelling.

The parish council consider this a more modest scheme than the previous application and have no objection or comments.

CA/21/01966 - 12 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 0HH

Single-storey rear extension.

The parish council had worked up a response but it now appears that this application has been withdrawn as no file can be found on the CCC Planning Portal.

63. Use of Section 101 since the last meeting - None.

64. Parish Council banking arrangements:

NOTED the closure of current and savings bank accounts held with Lloyds Bank on 04 August 2021 and transfer of all funds to the new Unity Trust online account. NOTED that new signatories with the same signing arrangements with Unity are being arranged but delayed as Unity asked for further ID documents for one of the signatories. The Clerk advised that she contacted Unity on 17 September 2021 and Unity confirmed receipt of the document but are working in strict date order for correspondence and were working on 25 August documents at that time. So it is anticipated that the six months of payments outstanding should be presentable within 2-4 weeks. Once this mandate has been processed a further one will be completed by the Clerk to add the four new councillors.

CCC Capital grant 2021-2022

CCC has awarded £350 to the parish council for a new picnic bench on the village green.

NOTED that on 22 July 2021 the Clerk completed the grant agreement, BACS form and prepared an invoice for the payment to be processed. The WVPS has kindly donated £262 to this project and the picnic bench has been paid for by the Clerk and is now ready for delivery and will be installed by WVPS volunteers in due course.

CCC Capital grants for 2022-2023

CCC is now accepting capital grant applications for 2022/23. The deadline is midday on 01 November 2021. Be aware that the number of taxable properties is yet to be updated from the previous year, the correct numbers will be taken into account when the applications are scored later in the year.

To assist parishes in the writing of these applications CCC will be holding workshops. These will provide an opportunity for parishes to bring ideas forward and engage in discussions about how best to complete the application form and therefore get the most from this process. Dates for the workshops are to be finalised.

65. Finance

- i) RECEIVED the bank statements and bank reconciliation for July and August 2021 and RESOLVED the signature of Cllr Harlow thereon.
- ii) As reported to the April meeting, on 20 March 2021 the Clerk instructed the tree surgeon to proceed with Option 2 work for the feature tree in the churchyard - Half removed down to better wood for £450. Bird nesting delayed implementation of this. NOTED that the Clerk did a tree works exemption application to CCC to do the work to a tree in a conservation area on 17 August 2021.
- iii) NOTED the Clerk has downloaded and prepared a form to amend the bank details held with the ICO (information Commissioners Office) for the annual direct debit fee of £35 due each June. This form needs to be signed by two Cllr signatories.

66. Westbere Charities

Nigel Denne has resigned as a Trustee of Westbere Charity due to ill health. As he was elected by Westbere Parish Council, it is required to nominate a replacement. Mrs Judith Van den Broek is prepared to stand for a four and a half year term of office as a Nominative Trustee of the Westbere Charity, commencing on the 1st of October 2021 until 31st March 2026. Cllr Harlow proposed, Cllr Wilson seconded and all councillors RESOLVED this appointment.

67. Clerk report

The Clerk advised that there was nothing extra to report this month not elsewhere on the agenda.

68. Councillor responsibilities

RESOLVED the setting of councillor responsibilities for 2021-2022 until May 2022 as follows:

- Newsletter production – Clerk and Newsletter distribution – All Councillors and Clerk;
- Street lights – Cllr P. Glover;
- Transport – All councillors;
- Planning – Cllr Harlow and Cllr Dekker;
- Fire Hydrants – Cllr P. Glover;
- KMBR reports – Cllr Harlow;
- Environment – Cllr Harlow;
- Neighbourhood Watch, and parish council representative on the Village hall committee – Cllr Wilson;
- Monitoring of the village salt bins – Cllr P. Glover;
- Village events – All councillors;
- Parish council representative for Westbere Village Preservation Society (WVPS) and attend WVPS meetings – Cllr Wilson.

NOTED that the Clerk will amend this information on the parish council website in order to satisfy the Transparency Regulations requirements.

69. Next Newsletter

Cllrs P Glover, Harlow and Wilson to send the Clerk a paragraph about themselves for inclusion in the next newsletter. It will also include details about the 3 vacancies and a broadband update
The Newsletter distribution was agreed. Since the agenda was posted, a resident has kindly volunteered to deliver to the three unassigned roads.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.



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Signed: Cllr Paul Glover, Chairman

Date:

Please note these Minutes remain as draft Minutes until they are approved by the parish council at their next parish council meeting

Next Meeting dates for 2021-2022: Third Monday of each month except no meeting in August and December – 18 October, 15 November 2021, 17 January 2022