

Minutes of the meeting of Westbere Parish Council held on Monday 15 January 2024 in Westbere Village Hall at 7.00pm.

Present: Parish Councillors:

Paul Glover (Chairman), Sylvia Harlow (Vice Chairman), Ken Dekker, Georgina Glover, Dave Wilson, and Kathy Wilson (now using her new married name of Cllr Kathy Fielding).

CCC Cllr Harry McKenzie

Clerk to the Council, Amanda Sparkes.

7 residents

157. The Chairman's opening remarks

Cllr P. Glover welcomed everyone to the meeting, and he also gave a reminder of rules for public participation during the meeting.

158. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Parish Cllr Granville Glover, KCC Cllr Alan Marsh and CCC Cllr Keji Moses.

159. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Georgina Glover advised she has been appointed temporarily by CCC to act as a parish councillor on Womenswold Parish Council. There is no change to her DPI (Declarations of Pecuniary Interests) form.

Cllr K Dekker advised he is now the permanent clerk for Sturry Parish Council. His revised DPI (Declarations of Pecuniary Interests) form will be sent to CCC by the Clerk after the meeting.

Cllr Kathy Wilson advised that she would like to be known with her newly married name of Cllr Kathy Fielding – her DPI remains unchanged.

160. Minutes of the last meeting held 20 November 2023

Cllr Dekker proposed and Cllr Georgina Glover seconded and all councillors agreed they were a true record of the meeting, and the Chairman duly signed them.

161. Parish Councillors' reports

Cllr Dekker had nothing to report.

Cllr Georgina Glover commented on recent garden waste and builders rubble fly tipping one-offs.

Cllr K Wilson advised the village hall committee meeting would be held on 16 January 2024.

Cllr D Wilson had nothing to report.

Cllr Harlow had nothing to report.

Cllr P. Glover had nothing else to report not noted elsewhere on the agenda.

162. Adjournment of the meeting for Parishioners' questions and comments.

A resident explained the fly tipping by the convent had been reported, a tyre was added to it, but it has now all been removed.

Another resident explained the EA letter for the glamping application specifies that there is no permission for commercial use.

A resident commented on the bad state of the pavement on the A28 between the convent to Bushy Hill Road – with broken glass, a dead fox, and encroaching vegetation. Cllr P Glover explained that after much chasing KCC did clear and widen it about 2 years ago when it was bad enough. It needs monitoring.

A resident advised the road sweeping had been done today and is now done regularly which makes the roads much tidier.

Cllr D Wilson asked about the salt bins – there is no one with responsibility to use the salt – any residents may help themselves to it for the roads (not their personal drives or paths). The Clerk will add this to the next newsletter.

A resident advised of assigned police officers for all wards now. CCC Cllr McKenzie said some have visited parish council meetings or surgeries – The beat officer for Westbere is now Simon Proctor and one other tbc.

Since October people with slingshots, torches and guns have been seen late at night in Westbere in people's private property / Gardens – they've been seen on ring doorbell footage and when confronted they said they're shooting pigeons – this has been reported to Kent police by a number of residents. Cllr Kathy Fielding explained that although the Canterbury District neighbourhood watch has now disbanded she will still take and circulate reports like this. CCC Cllr McKenzie said

he would advise the beat officer – he will also send the Clerk details of the My Community Voice app to promote for posts like this.

A resident asked about the site visit made by the Clerk (later on the agenda) to Russett Orchard owners. Tree works were undertaken last weekend – was there permission? Chainsaws were heard significantly so they questioned if the work would have been exempt for anything dead or under 75mm. The Clerk was asked to check with CCC if any tree works application had been made.

163. Report from City Councillor Cllr Harry McKenzie

Cllr Harry McKenzie advised he and CCC Cllr Keji Moses visited the Canterbury Food Bank in December for a tour. Whilst there appears no food bank use in Westbere there is heavy use in Sturry and Hersden. The city councillors are working to raise food donations if anyone can help - they are still planning events.

Cllr Harry McKenzie joined the CCC Leader and the cabinet member for climate change and biodiversity (Cllr Mel Dawkins), and others at the Canterbury Climate Action Partnership's climate action festival and awards ceremony to learn more about local initiatives to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss and to acknowledge those in our district who have gone above and beyond to protect our environment

He advised that CCC Cllr Keji Moses attended Westbere Preschool's Christmas event where she got to learn more about the work that the staff, committee, and volunteers do to care for their children and enjoyed spending time with them during their festivities.

They were able to secure twenty-four hardship vouchers (worth £30 each) from the Lord Mayor's Christmas Gift Fund for people in need in our district. They spent a lot of time surveying local organisations and identifying where there was need and gave ten vouchers to the KCC Community Warden (Linda Hayes), ten to the Hersden Community Centre, and four to the Sturry Church of England Primary School for redistribution to those in need in the ward.

Cllr Harry McKenzie advised that the Canterbury District Local Plan consultation should be released in March, and there is a Full Council meeting in February regarding the CCC budget.

The farm shop at Broad Oak closed on Christmas eve however the Butcher of Brogdale next door is to reopen it in the next two weeks as a greengrocer supplying local fruit and vegetables.

A resident commented that with CCC raising parking charges to £3.70/hour people are signing a petition as they think this will drive people away. Cllr McKenzie believed it is to clear debt inherited, he did not want to do this. The Sturry Park and Ride is due to open in July 2024.

164. Planning matters

Russett Orchard – The Clerk attended an informal site meeting on 22 December 2023 with the new owners of now part of the old Russett Orchard site – we may anticipate an outline planning application in the near future for 1 – 3 new dwellings for comment.

Village Green application by The Two Fields Action to KCC for the Two Fields site

The final decision will be taken by a Member Panel from the KCC Regulation Committee. NOTED The parish council's letter will now be sent by email by the Clerk to the KCC Regulation Committee Members in support of the Two Fields Action Group's call to register the Eastern part of the land as village green.

Bread and Cheese field – currently in Hersden parish -

The ePetition to CCC with a boundary review request for the Bread and Cheese field may be found on the CCC website at [ePetition - Parish Boundary Review for the Bread and Cheese Field Green Space \(Westbere/Hersden\) | Canterbury City Council](#)

As there are more than 97 valid signatures a report is now going to a special CCC General Purposes Committee meeting on 29 January 2024, presumably with a recommendation that a Community Governance Review be undertaken – this would be done by CCC only without the involvement of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England – and the decision subsequently taken by CCC. If a change to the parish boundary is agreed an Order would be made. The Order for the boundary change would take effect from 01 April the following year (from an election point of view electoral arrangements would change from the 4-yearly May 2027 parish elections.)

The Community Governance Review would be for a boundary change only – protection of the site/removal of it as a strategic housing site in the next draft Local Plan is a separate process.

Cllr P Glover and the Clerk attended the Hersden Parish Council on 12 December 2023 where three Westbere residents addressed Hersden councillors. Hersden Parish Council resolved at its meeting

that it supports the protection of the Bread and Cheese field, and will work with Westbere Parish Council if any proposed development of the Bread and Cheese Field arises (regardless of which parish it is/remains in).

Cllr D Wilson proposed and Cllr Dekker seconded and all councillors RESOLVED that Westbere Parish Council supports the protection of the Bread and Cheese field from housing and development. Cllr Georgina Glover proposed, Cllr Dekker seconded and all councillors RESOLVED that Westbere Parish Council will work with Hersden Parish Council if any proposed development of the Bread and Cheese Field arises (regardless of which parish it is/remains in).

Cllr Harlow proposed, Cllr Fielding seconded and all councillors RESOLVED that Westbere Parish Council will now write to its CCC Ward Cllrs and the relevant CCC Cllrs undertaking the review of the Canterbury District Local Plan seeking a removal of the site as a strategic site for housing in light of all the current development locally where road infrastructure in particular cannot cope with more.

A resident commented that the SLAA (Strategic Land Availability Assessment) for the site is misleading – there were two previous applications for 2 houses fronting the A28 in 1979 and 1984, and while the SLAA states there are no pylons there are power lines.

CA/22/01388 - Walnut Tree Livery, Bushy Hill Road, Westbere, CT2 0HE – application still undetermined by CCC for Retrospective application for change of use of land to campsite in addition to existing use for livery/horse keeping. There is no update.

Cllr P Glover advised a resident had let him know that the CIC (Company number 14224917) WALNUT TREE FOUNDATION CIC set up for the glamping has been dissolved on Companies House website.

Notifications:

CA/23/02042 - 7 Bushy Hill Road, Westbere CT2 0HE

TPO no 1 1991 WES, Pine tree in rear garden, reduce lowest branches to 1.5-2 meters. GRANTED

Delay of the Sturry Link Road to Summer 2025 and push for Sturry Train station platforms lengthening and associated required signal changes, software and announcement changes, etc. – NOTED that the Chairman and Clerk attended a meeting with a Network Rail representative at Sturry on Friday 24th November 2023.

Cllr P Glover advised news that the Sturry platform extension was previously ruled out on cost grounds, but it's now being looked at for inclusion in the Local Plan that's currently being reviewed as it fits with the public transport focused strategy. The reviewed Local Plan is likely to be published for consultation in late February/early March so the proposal would form part of that (in other words, subject to public consultation).

165. Finance

NOTED there has been no use of S.101 Scheme of Delegation to the Clerk since the last meeting. NOTED a BACS payment from CCC on 05 December 2023 of £547 being the CCC capital grant for the replacement bench seat on the village green.

NOTED on 12 December 2023 that NALC advised that the government has excluded local (town and parish) councils from council tax referendum principles in 2024/2025. The government's Local Government Finance Policy Statement for 2024/2025 outlined proposed referendum principles, including a core council tax referendum 3% limit for local authorities and exemptions for mayoral combined authorities and local councils.

RECEIVED An End of Quarter Three payments and receipts report for information and NOTED that this was uploaded on 04 January 2024 to the parish council's website to satisfy the Transparency Regulations.

Pick up after your dog

Councillors considered locations for erecting dog fouling signs – 10 x A5 size have now been purchased. Locations agreed included the two entrances to the village green, Bushy Hill Road, the book library/phone box, Walnut Tree Lane railway line path, and the path to the Two Fields off Westbere Lane – Cllr P Glover will put these up. It was confirmed that the Clerk no longer needs to do a request for locations in the next newsletter.

166. Authorisation of online payments

The Chairman signed the Finance Appendix x2 for Minute book and Invoice file.

167. **Assets**

Actions continuing/required from 23 July 2023 Asset Inspection

NOTED the Clerk has updated 'responses to the internal auditor' document further to the 31 March 2023 Year end internal auditor's report with actions/recommendations – this has been uploaded to the website – and this and an updated Asset Inspections Template circulated to all councillors on 04 January 2024.

Items which are the Responsibility of the village hall management committee – confirmed these will be raised at the next meeting to be held on 16 January 2024 –

- Curved bench seat fixed to the village hall needs re-varnishing – this is the responsibility of the village hall committee
- Bronze plaque above the seat above is dirty and illegible – it requires cleaning and possibly re-touching of engraving – this is the responsibility of the village hall committee

C/fwd: Parish Council's responsibilities: Chairman leading with PC and WVPS for a village volunteer scheme for certain items such as treating benches, clearing ivy, cleaning book library (costs for materials to be met by the parish council)

168. **Whether the parish council should register with CCC assets in the village as Assets of Community Value, such as The Yew Tree pub**

Community Right To Bid legislation came in as part of the Localism Act. It means that the parish council may look to getting assets of community value in the village added to a register of assets, held by Canterbury City Council, whereby if there is any notice of their disposal or sale, the parish council be notified and the parish council/community then have a limited amount of time to raise finance and have a right to bid to buy the asset before it can be sold on the open market. (If any assets are successfully added to the register, this gives a right to bid on an asset – but not a right to buy).

The Yew Tree (although a going concern/business), the village hall, the church, and the lakes are all assets. C/fwd: Cllr D Wilson and Cllr P Glover will meet the chair and vice chair of the WVPS and think about priorities, risks, likelihood, and funding.

169. **Highways Improvement Template (HIP)**

NOTED further to the discussion at the informal meeting on 23 October the Clerk rewrote the HIP and circulated this to all councillors prior to the meeting. All councillors agreed this document.

Kent Highways have invited a review of the parish council's Highway improvement Plan and have offered a virtual meeting. It was agreed that a Zoom is not required at this time and that the Clerk should just send Kent Highways the HIP at this time.

170. **Clerk report**

Cessation of commissioned youth service contracts delivering discretionary youth services

Email received 01 December 2023 from the KCC Interim Director of Operational Integrated Children's Services | Children, Young People and Education:

"On 30 November Kent County Council Cabinet have taken decisions to progress with proposals on **how** and **where** we deliver community services across Kent, and a decision on the cessation of commissioned youth service contracts delivering discretionary youth services.

Members agreed with the proposal to further develop and implement a Family Hub service model in Kent.

This means that we will further deliver our Family Hub model through **a refreshed Family Hub Network**, offering a 0-19 age (25 SEND) Family Hub model for children, young people and their families with enhanced and innovative services set out by the DfE Family Hub Guidance. This will include Infant Feeding, Parenting Support, Home Learning Environment and Perinatal Mental Health. In addition to these, our Family Hub services will also deliver support and advice for parents on child development, activities for children aged 0-5, activity based support and information for older children and young people, information, advice and guidance about support services for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and their families, information and support and signposting to mental health services (children and adults), support for parents/carers of adolescents (teenagers) including online safety for children and young people.

The power of the Family Hub network will also allow us to work in partnership with the Voluntary Community Services (VCS) and other partners to provide additional specialist services, such as support for young people with substance misuse (alcohol/drugs), domestic abuse support, debt and welfare advice and signposting to information to support separating and separated parents. This does not include an exhaustive list of services; however, it is reflective of our understanding of the needs within our districts to reduce harm to children.

We do currently deliver these services in partnership across districts, however the access to services varies between each district and we want to ensure there is consistency for services users across Kent. In addition to this, Members also agreed with our proposal on the **cessation of commissioned youth service contracts delivering discretionary youth services when they end in March 2024**, saving KCC £1.2m. We will continue our KCC run youth provision, through a mix of activity at our Family Hub buildings and outreach locations, based on the needs of our young people within each district.

Cabinet also took the decision today to reduce our community building estate.

This means we will be closing 43 buildings across Kent, keeping two additional buildings that were originally proposed to close in our consultation document. This option took into consideration consultation feedback around the accessibility to services using public transport and the regularity of service and travel times to alternative locations. By implementing this option over the next two years, we will save £1.27m against the property revenue budget and reduce our maintenance backlog by £5.85m. Whilst there are 43 building closures within this option, our services will continue to be delivered from alternative locations across the District and the County. Please see attached list of buildings set to close.”

The decision made includes the co-location of some of services together within single buildings – for example placing children’s services within library settings.

More information regarding the decisions can be found [here](#)

Any questions, contact the Family Hub programme team Familyhubsfeedback@kent.gov.uk

171. Next newsletter

The Clerk will draft this.

172. Any new residents that a Westbere Parish plan may be delivered to – None. There are just two copies left.

173. **Creation of a Welcome Pack**

The Clerk has drafted a welcome pack which had been circulated to all Cllrs with hard copies distributed to them at the meeting. Cllr. P Glover reminded councillors that the original requests for content came from residents. Cllr D Wilson commented that as a relative newcomer to the village he felt some things are not required, for example, the planning guidance. He also felt there could be issues with maintaining and keeping things up to date.

It was agreed that the welcome pack would be a physical document individually printed to be hand delivered to new residents – in the same way the Parish Plan folder is now – and this will replace the parish plan document when stocks are finished.

Cllr Georgina Glover recorded thanks to the Clerk for this first draft.

Cllr P Glover asked all councillors to edit it/feedback comments to the Clerk and all councillors by the next meeting when it will be revisited again.

The meeting closed at 8.20pm.

Next Meeting dates: the third Monday of the month except none in August and December: 19 February, 18 March, 15 April, 20 May, 17 June, 15 July, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November 2024.

Plus a date for the Annual Electors’ meeting to be confirmed between 01 March and 01 June 2024.

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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