

**Minutes of the Littlebourne Parish Council Annual Parish Meeting held on Wednesday 20 MARCH 2024, at Littlebourne War Memorial Hall Lounge at 7.30pm**

**Present**

- Parish Councillors; Cllr Peter Farrow, Cllr Mick Giles, Cllr Brian Hurlow, Cllr Cate Reid, Cllr Lee Castle, Cllr Melanie Moore, Cllr John Sullivan, Cllr Nick Posener
- Clerk Mrs Gail Hubbard
- Country Cllr Mike Sole, PC Dominic Taylor
- There were 16 members of the public present.

**1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES**

The Chairman, Cllr Farrow welcomed everyone to the meeting. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Andrew Fraser and resident Mrs Viv Spratt had also sent her apologies for not attending.

**2. 2023 MINUTES**

The 2023 minutes were proposed by Cllr Reid, seconded by Cllr Moore and AGREED. These minutes are available on the LPC website, and a paper copy is available tonight if anyone wishes to read them.

**3. MILLENNIUM AWARD 2024**

Each year the parish council votes a Millennium Award to someone who has contributed significantly to the village. This year the following people were proposed by villagers with these citations:

**THE LATE DOUG INKPEN** – He lived in the village from 1935-2022. As an amateur musician he was well known for playing at a number of village functions over thirty years, including twinning events, pantomimes, summer fairs and at the village school.

**SUE & ALAN BULL** – They have been running the bingo in the hall for many years, and for the last two years also the monthly social meetings. Any profits are for the hall. Alan and Sue also check the hall over on a weekly basis, checking for any maintenance work that needs carrying out, Alan does a huge amount of this himself, all on a voluntary basis. They both also help out neighbours with lifts to hospital and GP appointments and even some dog sitting when needed. Sue is Chairman of LWMH. They both work tirelessly volunteering in the village

**CAROL CHILDS**- She puts in many hours of unpaid work to ensure everything is the best it can be for the children. Every child is treated as an individual and all their needs are taken care of by the team that is managed by Carol who has been in her position at Ladybirds for many years. She applies for all the relevant funding opportunities to make sure the children have as many resources as possible.

**EVELYN CLAYSON** – She always goes the extra mile for anything that is needed to keep the village looking good. Also over and above her role and in her own time, she makes sure anyone she knows who needs help or shopping gets her attention and help. After all these years she should be recognised for the contribution, she makes to the village.

**KAT TASOU** – She does so much as volunteer to support local children and families. She took over the running of the under 5s Stay & Play Group in the Chapel, two years ago when it was at risk of closing due to lack of leaders. Kat provides weekly crafts, cooking activities, toys and games and a safe place for parents to get support. She is also a Squirrels leader with 1st Littlebourne Scout pack. She is selfless and kind, constantly thinking of others and putting others first and her dedication to the children and families of Littlebourne deserve recognition.

**KEN SHAW** – For all the support he has given to the village community and continues to give to the residents of Nargate Street.

**BEN RELPH** – Look after all the children whilst his partner works twelve hour shifts aswell as looking after his sisters and mother in law when she needs assistance. He never complains he just gets on with it.

**SYLVIA WILSON** – since retiring she has willingly shared her skills by serving on the Parish Council and as a School Governor for Littlebourne School. Sylvia is now treasurer and an active member of LWMH Committee, among many projects she helped introduce the bingo sessions. She is also treasurer for Turners Orchard.

This year the winners of the Millennium Award are Sue & Alan Bull. The Chairman then presented Sue & Alan with a certificate and cheque for £100. Their names will also be added to the Millennium Award Board in the hall.

#### 4. CHAIRMANS REPORT

**Chairman, Cllr Farrow gave his report, including slides as follows:**

**Finances – income made up from:**

- Precept 2024-25 Band D property £67.81
- Concurrent funding from CCC (future of this uncertain)
- Grants/gifts
- CIL money

**Last years activities:**

- LPC have taken ownership of the land at the top of the Laurels and will now be maintaining this going forward.
- Objecting to the development on The Hill – still awaiting a decision.
- Opening the public toilet

**Local Plan to 2040**

The latest revised version of the Local Plan is now available and out for consultation. Cllr Farrow reminded residents that we need to respond again to let CCC know that we are still not happy with the inclusion of the two sites in Littlebourne;  
Policy R7 – The Hill 300 homes

Policy R8 – Land North of Court Hill 50 homes

Please do add your comments to the consultation document its [Draft Canterbury District Local Plan to 2040](#)

We have been advised that the river levels have now peaked, so lets hope they are right!

**Southern Water tankering issues**

The Chairman had been in communication with Southern Water who had provided him with details of works they have planned to the sewer network in Littlebourne which includes sections to be relined and others to be sealed (slides showing this detail were displayed)

**Future activities:**

- Responding to the Local Plan

- Smartening up the area around the outside of the hall complex (paving repairs, replacement bollards)
- Moving forward with the 20mph limit

The Chairman then thanked all the Cllrs and Clerk for their work over the last twelve months. He also mentioned Mrs Clayson and thanked her for all her efforts in the village.

## 5. COUNTY AND CITY COUNCILLOR REPORTS

- **Cllr Lee Castle gave his report as follows:**

Good evening everyone.

It is a pleasure to stand here as your local city councillor and what a busy and interesting year it has been so far.

The council has been run as a coalition for these past 10 months and many internal changes and wider external projects have and are coming to the fore.

The new draft local plan with some major changes such as zones and bypasses have gone and a focus on a more bus led strategy leads the new approach.

The reopening of Sturry park and Ride, the purchase of some new council houses, the start of a slow but important journey for providing more homes and also the reopening of the popular market.

I have been to lots of the local parish council meetings of which I'm also a member here at Littlebourne, and I would like to thank the chair, the other council members and Gail the clerk for their ongoing support with issues and topics that have arisen relating to local residents.

Locally I have spent a lot of my time chasing historic issues including housing, trees, parking, planning and also bins collection to name a few. On the matter of bin collections, it was a challenging start for the new council last year, but thankfully things have moved forward and with changes to garden waste collections, after feedback from residents and the continued approach of being in 'listening mode' at all times and tackling problems when they arise problems are on a downward trend.

I have also dealt with stagecoach with regards to buses across the ward and generally tried to engage with everyone who had a question, query or issue. Sometimes this means not getting the answer that had been hoped for but i am always prepared to explain, discuss and help residents understand the processes and why decisions are made. I may not have the answer but I will always find out from the right person who does.

The new budget was agreed very recently and unlike a lot of councils no actual cuts have been made but many of the departments are dealing with very tight margins which means working hard to prioritise the issues that need to be dealt with first.

In Littlebourne the main issue I currently get communications about is the impending decision due around the Gladman site on the Hill.

From the start I have been very much against the site which is also in the draft local plan. however, now due to the separate site proposed behind my own home in court

hill, I will not be able to vote on the local plan after being advised by the council's legal team that I would predetermine.

That said that decision means I can now take and express opinions on all parts of the local plan publicly and my opposition to the Gladman site remains.

The issue around sewage treatment and disposal remains and one would hope the planning department will soon call time on Gladman trying to find alternative options and reject the application. However, it is still essential that everyone does respond to the local plan.

The addition of another 50 home site on court hill not dissimilar to the laurels site would also affect a lot of residents, so please do take part in the consultation and if anyone needs any help please get in touch.

At the city council due to the coalition I have been heavily involved in the Licensing and planning and scrutiny committees. As a member of the scrutiny subcommittee. It has been great to be able to review the various council department performances, how well they deliver services and ask questions to expand and improve our understanding of residents needs.

So to conclude, I would hope you have seen myself as a visible and accessible city councillor, who is willing to engage and find solutions. It has been an enjoyable first year and I look forward to continuing helping to drive the council and the local villages in a positive direction.

- **Cllr Mike Sole gave his report as follows (notes taken):**

Cllr Sole has been our County Cllr for three years now, covering a large area with 16 parishes. At KCC Cllr Sole is one of six Liberal Democrat Cllrs out of eighty one overall. KCC are stretched for finances and could find themselves on the brink of bankruptcy. There have been cuts to services going forward Community Wardens, bus services and youth services amongst others.

Cllr Sole has been working with parishes on their HIP's with some success across the ward. Has also been involved in bus stop improvements in some villages, improving accessibility to the buses for wheelchair/buggy users.

Cllr Sole continues to chase pothole repairs and encourages residents to report any of these on the fault reporting tool <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/report-a-problem>

Cllr Sole has been keeping abreast of the river levels in the area and communicating with the EA, CCC and the LS&N River Group.

Cllr Sole has been involved in some school appeals and bus issues in the last year. He has also been visiting St Anselm's School and has held several surgeries at The Ivy Barn in Littlebourne.

Cllr Sole is also City Councillor for the neighbouring Nailbourne Ward and sits on the Finance Committee, on this he will be fighting to retain the concurrent function funding for parishes. It is unlikely to increase but hopefully this will remain for the next three years.

## **6. REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES AND LOCAL ORGANISATIONS**

- **Sloyden & Durrant Charities**

Cllr Giles annual report was read out as follows:

A report by Cllr M Giles at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the War Memorial Hall on 20th March 2024 to which all residents were invited.

I would first of all like to thank Ken Shaw who stood down from the Council last year for his 21 years as a trustee to this charity and welcome Cllr Cate Reid as a new trustee.

The Charity exists to help residents in need or hardship and relies on such cases being brought to our attention and since our last Annual Parish Meeting in 2023 a payment of £300 was made leaving a balance at the 1<sup>st</sup> March of £929.44. The account book as always is available tonight to anyone wishing to see it, or at any other reasonable time by written application to the Parish Council Clerk.

- **Littlebourne Horticultural Society**

Helen Howard the Chair read her report as follows:

It sometimes feels as though the whole of last summer was taken up with worrying about Colorado beetle, not to mention blight. DEFRA Plant and Animal Health Agency Inspectors, who were unfailingly polite and friendly, asked permission to check the site every week for 6 weeks or so, after a minor infestation was found on a farm nearby. But we didn't fall victim to it. Then it was Asian Hornets! Thanks to the vigilance of our members, when the Inspector put up some humane traps on the site he caught one, and our location on their map led them to the nest, which could have been up to 3 miles away. So we were thanked for our help. This year we have already been alerted to an Asian Hornet queen overwintering not far away in Ash, so we are back to alert mode.

Is there ever a time when growers don't complain about the weather? Last year was no different there, and it was very disappointing to see some potatoes and tomatoes succumb to blight yet again after late rain showers just as the tomatoes were ripening. This year I have chosen blight resistant varieties of both.

Recent research told us that people who grow their own food, waste less than those who don't, because they give away their surplus. Customers of the foodbank at the Baptist church in Canterbury have been delighted to get fresh rhubarb, spinach, beans of various kinds, courgettes and apples, outdoor cucumbers (described by them as real cucumbers because they are nobbly!). I've heard it said that people who use food banks don't know how to cook – it is not true! Composting also became even more important during the strike when our bins were not emptied. We are told that home composting is a valuable contribution to reducing our carbon footprint.

We have been delighted to see the development of the gardening and nature club in Wickhambreaux which has been so useful as a learning opportunity for less confident or new gardeners who aren't ready to take on an allotment. We had hoped to set up our own community gardening project but haven't made any progress yet on that idea.

Security of the site was a continuing problem this year as it has been for as long as I can remember. It is very difficult to get everyone to lock the gate, scramble the code on the padlock, and not give the code to anyone else. In addition, with houses down two sides of the site, it seems to be inevitable that the boundary is full of gates, which have probably been there a long time, and are not always kept locked.

The regular annual review of H&S policies and risk assessments took up a lot of energy again. Thanks to the Parish Council, we were able to take advice from a local retired H&S professional, and new procedures are in place to ensure everyone's safety when they use mowers and strimmers. We've now got all the right notices on display and have taken one piece of equipment out of use as we were advised it is unsafe.

After a lengthy battle with Nat West Bank to get online access to our account, we eventually changed to Lloyds and so far we are receiving a much better service. Following consultation with members we agreed to pay someone to come and cut the main communal areas of grass as members were not willing to give up their precious time to do it. However, with the ground so wet the start of the grass cutting season has been delayed.

As usual we have had some historical problems to sort out. We have a problem with bamboo invading from a neighbouring garden, which is a reminder of what not to plant on an allotment. Many thanks go to the Parish Clerk for trying to sort that one out for us. But we seem to have reached an impasse. However, many thanks again go to those faithful members, who turn out from time to time to help with the never-ending site maintenance. Thanks also to the Parish Council for their support especially Gail who is always there when we get into difficulties.

- **Green Energy Days**

Helen also mentioned the two Green Energy days; the EV car day had been held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> March with 12 electric cars on show in the long car park. The solar panel walk round is planned for Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> March. Please contact the Clerk for any further details.

- **LPC Community fund**

Cllr Giles report was read out as follows:

A report by Cllr M Giles at the Annual Parish Meeting held in the War Memorial Hall on the 20th March 2024 to which all residents were invited.

**Purpose:**

To facilitate the distribution of the rent received from the Parish Council funded extension to the 4 Villages Store, by providing finance for community events and

projects in the Parish of Littlebourne through the village organizations and / or others and where funding from any other source is not available or is incomplete.

Since our last Annual Parish Meeting in 2023 we have provided the village Christmas tree as we will do annually and funded the Kings Coronation party, the Rose Acre Road street party, servicing the new flagpole and new equipment for Littlebourne football club.

Since the fund was set up in March 2013, we have been able to fund projects and events totaling £30350.61 leaving a current balance of £8579.86 and last year's rental payment of approximately £3800 is due later this year.

To any village organizations and others who maybe considering running events or projects they feel would benefit the community please take advantage of this fund. Applications to the chairman Cllr Mick Giles Tel 728228 or email [cllr.giles@littlebournepc.org](mailto:cllr.giles@littlebournepc.org) committee will give all applications careful consideration.

Full details including written estimates and quotations are required as is the production of final invoices and detailed expenditure on completion of the event or project.

- **Traffic Action and Highways**

Cllr Hurlow Chair of this sub-committee gave his report as follows:

There has been progress over the year between us and Kent Highways with regard to the addition of the other half of the gateway by the woods on the opposite side from that installed by Highways. After some confusion on what we could and could not do ourselves it is now in place for us to proceed with a contractor for installation of a copy of the one opposite, permission to install into the woodland had already been gained. This is to be carried out in the near future.

As you are now aware we are into the next step in trying to gain a 20mph zone in the village after Kent Highways informed us that the speed threshold was ok to proceed but only in the area and roads indicated on the map along with the survey. The survey is an important step in the overall process that has to be implemented and we hope many villagers will respond with their thoughts on this. To take the process to the next stage we need a majority of villagers to be in favour of the 20-mph zone so we can send this onto Kent Highways for their approval.

I know, from Facebook comments, that a number of villagers will be disappointed that it does not include the High Street or the Hill but our hands are currently tied on that one as the data from Highways has indicated that the average speeds are still too high for a 20 mph limit on these roads. It is in our Highways Improvement Plan to still try to get this added but at least we have progress for the other roads.

The costs for the scheme have been set aside by the Parish Council and it is always hoped that other funding might be gained to mitigate our own costs. I'm sorry that

progress seems to be slow on the above issues but the 'wheels' move slowly when it comes to negotiations with Kent Highways.

- **Littlebourne War Memorial Hall**

Chair Sue Bull read her report as follows:

We are delighted to report that the Hall has had another successful year. We have seen several new hirers using the hall and some of our current hirers have extended their usage. We now cater for many diverse groups and age ranges from babies through to toddlers, uniform groups, dance, adults with activities such as chess, war games, social afternoons, bingo, afternoon club, sewing, exercise, country dancing, and the Inner Wheel. The NHS frequently use the hall for their meetings and training sessions, and we are now seeing that one to one victim support counselling hope to use the upstairs room for their clients. It is good to see that we appeal to such a large variety of genres, that we believe reflects the quality of what we have to offer. In addition to this we still cater for christenings, birthdays, weddings, and family occasions.

During the year our insurance company requested a survey of the whole hall complex. This was done and the surveyors worked out the percentage of the building to be allocated to the four areas i.e. Hall, Shop, Recreation Club and Parish Council. When the survey was completed, it was sent to the insurance company, and it became obvious that we were under insured and an uptake in premiums was necessary. We are now fully insured, and the insurance company can now calculate each year the correct cost of the buildings. Whilst the cost of demolition and rebuild of the complex was a bit of a shock, we are now in a more secure position. The outside lights have been replaced and an extra sensor has been installed that ensures the lights come on much quicker and we have had several comments about how good they are now.

Inside the hall, new extractor fans have been installed in the facilities, all with cut of switches that will enable future work on them is easier with no need to switch off all the electrics. We have also arranged for the fans to be inspected and professionally cleaned on a yearly basis.

The roof inspections have proved to be of great use as any small defects can be detected and dealt with before they turn into a massive problem, and we have now had another winter with our roof safe and secure.

During the quiet summer months the committee, together with some other help, did some maintenance work. All the cupboards were cleaned out and rearranged in a more logical manner. The front of the stage was cleaned and repainted. High cleaning was achieved. The radiators and the windows were also given a deep clean. A new gas hob has been fitted in the main hall kitchen. Corner strips were put up in the facilities lobby as they are being badly chipped. We know it is not easy to get the tables out of the lobby so the strips should prevent any further damage.



As you now, the hall floor was upgraded and repaired, unfortunately, we had a radiator leak in the main hall that impacted the floor. The floor company advised us to allow this to dry out completely and they have today assessed the damage that is minimal as the floor has dried up well, a light sanding and sealing is all that is needed, and this will be done during the May half term holiday. The planned maintenance cleaning will be done on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024

We continue with our weekly walk rounds to ensure that the hall is kept safe and secure, and a new risk assessment policy has just been agreed.

We applied for and was successful in gaining a grant from CCC that should arrive at the end of March/beginning of April. This will go towards continuing the replacement of the external fire doors in the lounge. As this is a significant spend, we have obtained new quotes and visited the companies who have tendered for this work. A decision was made last night as to the preferred company.

We know that we would not be able to achieve so much without the support of the Parish Council, 4VPO, Community Fund and grants from CCC. We are most appreciative of this and intend to keep the Hall in the best possible condition to serve the needs of the community.

The Chairman thanked the organisations and volunteers that had given reports this evening.

## **7. RESIDENTS QUESTIONS**

A resident asked a question relating to the outfall of the drainage pipes in Turners Orchard. Cllr Giles responded that he had plans of these pipes if they would be of use.

Cllr Reid thanked the Chairman for his work over the last twelve months.

The Chairman then thanked everyone for coming and closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

Signed..... (Chairman)

Date.....

***Please note these minutes will remain unapproved until the APM in 2025***