

**Little Chart Parish Council (LCPC)**

*Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held in-public and in-person on Tuesday 1st June 2021 at Little Chart Village Hall, The Street, TN27 0QB beginning at 7.30pm*

<b>Unique Minute No 83/</b>	<b>Business</b>	<b>Record</b>	<b>Action (by whom, &amp; within what timescale)</b>
<b>1</b>	Note of Persons Present	Cllrs Brasier (Chairman) Ladds, Diebel, Beck, 8 members of the public, Mr Sharpe (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer/ RFO). The meeting was quorate, with 4 Councillors.	
<b>2</b>	Apologies	Cllr Rivolta, Ashford Borough Councillor Clair Bell	
<b>3</b>	Election of Chairman	Richard Brasier was nominated by A Diebel, seconded C Beck. No other nominations came forward. Cllr Brasier was therefore elected as Chairman LCPC 21-22, and signed the statutory form of Declaration of Acceptance of Office (DoAoO) before the Clerk. Cllr Ladds was then nominated by R Brasier as Vice-Chair for the year, seconded A Diebel, elected unanimously.	<b>Clerk</b> to notify Ashford Borough Council and file DoAoO in Minutes Book.
<b>4</b>	Declarations of Interest	The Chairman asked Parish Councillors to declare any interests in the business on the agenda. No declarations were made.	
<b>5</b>	Minutes of last meeting	The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting (no 82) on 9 <sup>th</sup> March 2021 and were agreed as a true record; proposed A Diebel, seconded C Beck	<b>Clerk</b> to arrange paper signatures and return, and place them in the Minutes Book after signature, & ensure website is updated by 18 <sup>th</sup> June.
<b>6</b>	Matters arising	The Council dealt with matters arising from those Minutes during the course of the following agenda items.	
<b>7</b>	Public Interval	When invited to speak by the Chairman, a member of the public requested permission to arrange for a memorial item to a long-time Little Chart resident to stand on the Plantation. A debate followed on the form of the item, and which of the residents will collect funds and arrange for installation. Suggestions included a rose bush, a flower show trophy, and a sturdy bench with a plaque. Consideration was also given to ongoing costs of maintenance. Councillors noted that the subject was on the meeting agenda as a Correspondence Item (13.4), and RESOLVED to respond positively to the initiative. This includes giving permission for an agreed and suitable memorial to be placed towards the North end of The Plantation, and receptiveness to further approaches for top-up funding and maintenance costs. Proposed R Brasier, seconded J Ladds.	
<b>8</b>	Membership of Committees, including the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) Committee	The Parish Council considered the requirement under its Standing Orders to review membership of Committees and Outside Bodies annually. After discussion, it RESOLVED to continue the existing arrangements. It also RESOLVED to establish the Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) Committee to include 3 members of the public, who volunteered there and then. The Council then went on to review the effectiveness of the recent works in Swan Lane on Village Gateways. It expressed disappointment in the minimal visual changes in appearance, the lack of impact of the improvements on driver behaviour, and noted that some finishing-off appeared still to be completed.	<b>Clerk</b> to refine the draft ToR to reflect the nature of the Working Party on Highways Improvements, circulate to HIPC members, <b>Clerk</b> to arrange a date for an initial in-person Committee meeting under COVID-security provisions, by email, by 25 <sup>th</sup> June.
<b>9</b>	Scheme of Delegations	There are no existing schemes of delegation. R Brasier remains LCPC's nominee to the Ashford Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)	
<b>10</b>	Council Policies Review	Councillors took note of the extant policies published on the website, and were aware of the need for periodic review to be fit for purpose.	<b>Clerk</b> to prepare a list of desirable changes, by next PC meeting.

11	Financial report	<p>The Clerk &amp; Responsible Financial Officer Mr Sharpe informed Councillors that the bank reconciliation was accurately reflected in the statement balance of £15, 260.78, there being no outstanding cheques or lodgements. This end-of year figure led to reserves being adjusted on a journal transfer basis, the details of which appear on the Parish Council website. The Council then considered under LCPC <u>Financial Regulation 6.6</u> the previous payment of the cheques for: Chq no 531 KALC subscription £186.50 inc VAT; Chq no 532 M Sharpe Clerk's quarterly salary £398.49; Chq no 533 HMRC Clerk's quarterly Income Tax £66.00; Chq no 534 T Metcalfe Fencing Contractors Plantation extra bollards supply and install £495.72 inc VAT; Chq no 535 L Robbins Internal Auditor Fee £90.00 no VAT; Chq no 536 BHIB Insurance Parish Council Insurance Policy £472.20 no VAT. (None of these cheques signed on 25<sup>th</sup> May had yet been presented at bank;) and RESOLVED to ratify all of these payments, proposed J Ladds, seconded A Diebel.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b> to update Financial Day-Books and circulate next available Bank Statement to Councillors by email, by 11<sup>th</sup> June..</p>
12	Annual Governance & Audit Review (AGAR)	<p>Under the procedures established for Financial Year 2020/21 by the Government and the External Auditor, Mr Sharpe as Clerk read out the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) signed by the Internal Auditor, which the Council received and noted. Proposed J Ladds, seconded A Diebel.</p> <p>Councillors then considered the statements made in the Annual Governance Statement (AGAR Section 1), and RESOLVED to approve them. Proposed A Diebel, seconded J Ladds. The Chairman and the Clerk then signed the Annual Governance Statement 20/21.</p> <p>The Council then considered the Accounting Statements (AGAR Section 2) 20/21, which Mr Sharpe as RFO presented with his signature, and noted that LCPC spent more than the threshold figure of £25K and is therefore not able to submit an 'exemption' certificate this year. It RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statements, proposed R Brasier, seconded J Ladds. The Chairman then signed the Accounting Statements 20/21.</p> <p>Mr Sharpe as RFO then informed Councillors that he was minded to set the period for public inspection of the detailed accounting records to run from 7<sup>th</sup> June to 30<sup>th</sup> July inclusive. Councillors agreed that the Notice of Exercise of Public Rights required by law would appear on the Notice Board outside the Village Hall and on the website <a href="http://www.littlechartparishcouncil.org.uk">www.littlechartparishcouncil.org.uk</a> on or before Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June.</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b> to retain original signed documents within LCPC Finance records. <b>Clerk</b> to prepare electronic copies of signed documents and the bank reconciliation, analysis of variances above 2%, and allocation of reserves at year-end, for emailing to the External Auditor and publishing on the website, by 6<sup>th</sup> June. <b>Clerk</b> to inform Councillors of the External Auditor's response when received (end July/ early August)) <b>Clerk</b> to report to Council on updates to 'Proper Practices' document 21/22, at September PC meeting.</p>
13	Correspondence	<p>1. In connection with a request from a resident of The Forstal, Mr Sharpe as Clerk read out a short statement with proposals to effect repairs to potholes appearing on an accessway running from the highway at Ram Lane to the resident's property. After due consideration, the Council RESOLVED to allow either of the proposed methods of repair to be undertaken by the resident, at his own expense, with suitable protections for the Village Green. Proposed A Diebel, seconded J Ladd.</p> <p>2. The Chairman proposed to defer the agenda item about an easement across Parish Council land at The Forstal until the last item of the meeting – see below.</p> <p>3. Councillors considered a letter from a business owner in Swan Lane regarding the disruptive effects of the Swan Lane roadworks from 10<sup>th</sup> May (see Item 8 above). After due deliberation it RESOLVED to</p>	<p><b>Clerk</b> to email applicant with Council decision, by 3<sup>rd</sup> June.</p> <p><b>Cllr Brasier</b> to draft a reply in suitable terms,</p>

		reply to the complainant directly by email. Proposed R Brasier, seconded A Diebel. 4. Councillors confirmed their earlier resolution (at Item 7 above) regarding a memorial on The Plantation.	<b>Clerk</b> to email on behalf of LCPC, by 8 <sup>th</sup> June.
<b>14</b>	Little Chart Ruined Church	A Councillor raised concerns about fencing around the site being visually intrusive at a local heritage location. Boulders had also been noticed blocking off the existing car park at the side of the ruin, adjacent to Pluckley Road. A member of the public living near to the Church, when invited by the Chairman, offered the information that the fencing had been erected in September 2020, by contractors stating they were doing so on the instructions of Ashford Borough Council (ABC). The resident opined that the fencing was intended to deter night-time miscreants from interfering with the ruins, but this was not working. Picknickers were observed inside the fencing, and on one occasion had had to be dissuaded from interfering with safety barriers fixed in the masonry. Police had been called following the noise of a motorised drill on-site after dark. The Chairman noted that Ashford Borough Council's in-house grounds maintenance contractor Aspire was accepting responsibility for regular maintenance of the closed churchyard which surrounds the Ruin. Other members of the public present expressed their opinion that the heritage location should look better cared-for, and that car access and car parking at the site should be restored. After due deliberation, the Council RESOLVED to send a letter to ABC, as freehold owner of the main part of the Ruin site, to ask its intentions regarding the Scheduled Ancient Monument / Grade 2 Listed Building; and to express residents' disquiet about the current access arrangements. Proposed R Brasier, seconded A Diebel.	<b>Cllr Brasier</b> to draft a suitable letter/email  <b>Clerk</b> to ascertain responsible person within ABC, and send email, by 18 <sup>th</sup> June.
<b>15</b>	Forum for exchange of information	The Chairman invited informal discussion of local issues from Councillors. A Diebel informed colleagues that contact with the High-Speed Broadband Scheme had brought forward a start date for connection to The Street in September 2021, with installation completed by Christmas. C Beck announced that Charing & District Local History Society are in the process of digitising a lot of images, and some of these included Little Chart scenes from earlier centuries. If any resident wishes to see them, or be involved in digitisation, storage, cataloguing etc, please contact C Beck (Contact Form or phone details on the website <a href="http://www.littlechartparishcouncil.org.uk">www.littlechartparishcouncil.org.uk</a> ). Mention was made of future use of the Village Hall, and the possibility of a Craft Fair and similar community occasions.	.
<b>16</b>	Date of next Parish Council Meeting.	14 <sup>th</sup> September 2021 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall, subject to COVID-secure provisions	<b>Clerk</b> to arrange venue booking, prepare agendas and supporting papers, by 7 <sup>th</sup> September.
<b>17</b>	Response to request for an Easement on The Forstal	The Chairman under LCPC Standing Order 3 (d) proposed to exclude members of the public from the rest of the Annual Parish Council Meeting because the negotiation of the Easement required discussion among Councillors present of the personal circumstances of the applicant and other private individuals. The motion was seconded by A Diebel and AGREED. All but two members of the public left the meeting. The applicant and a companion remained in the meeting to provide information to Councillors, and then left. After further debate Councillors took a view that the proposed clause regarding parking of vehicles on Parish Council land (non-Village Green) should be the focus of their deliberations. Opinions on the Council's appropriate response to this proposal were evenly split, and therefore no decision was forthcoming.	<b>Clerk</b> to email applicant to inform, by 4 <sup>th</sup> June.  <b>All Councillors</b> to give further individual consideration to the issues involved, with a view to formulating a collective response, at the next PC meeting.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 9.44 pm.