

Little Chart Parish Council (LCPC)

Minutes of Annual Parish Council Meeting held in-public and in-person on Wednesday 11th May 2022 at Little Chart Village Hall, The Street, TN27 0QB beginning at 7.00pm.

Unique Minute No 87/	Business	Record	Action (by whom, & within what timescale)
1	Note of Persons Present	Parish Cllrs Brasier (Chairman), Diebel, Beck, and Ladds, Kent County Councillor C Simkins, Ashford Borough Councillor Clair Bell, PCSO 58851 Adam Brooks, and Mr Sharpe (Clerk & Responsible Financial Officer/ RFO). The meeting was quorate, with 4 Councillors.	
2	Apologies	None received.	
3	Election of Chairman and Vice-Chairman 2022-23	The Council considered nominations and RESOLVED to elect Richard Brasier as Chairman and Jane Ladds as Vice-Chairman <i>nem con</i> . Cllr Brasier then signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.	Clerk to file DoAoO straightway.
4	Declarations of Interest	The Chairman asked Parish Councillors to declare any interests in the business on the agenda. No declarations were made.	
5	Public Interval	<p>When invited to speak by the Chairman, PCSO Brooks updated the meeting on the current arrangements for PCSOs to be assigned to rural parishes. He replied to a question about trends in crime locally to say that online fraud has grown massively during the pandemic, and residents should be aware of the advice on staying safe when contacted by scammers. The Chairman thanked him for his attendance and he left the meeting to attend to other duties.</p> <p>Kent County Councillor Simkins then addressed the meeting to report on major issues which he was dealing with during his third term as KCC Councillor for the Ashford Rural West Division.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KCC's balanced budget for 22-23, with the 1.2% levy within Council Tax dedicated to Social Care • Planned bus cuts of £2.2 million – he appreciates problems which residents of Little Chart face, with the withdrawal of KCC support for the 123 service, and intends to be involved in the consultation and decisions at Cabinet and Committee level • Pluckley Water Main works (South East Water) and road closures (Kent Highways) – the works are intended for completion by the end of May • M20 traffic disruption has been managed at a National level, with KCC's input through the Kent Resilience Forum – situation under constant review • He has a particular interest in the Parish Council's Highways Improvement Plan process (20 mph limit) • He has a dual role of attending KCC meetings and being approachable for residents in his Division to increase democratic involvement. <p>The Chairman thanked Cllr Simkins for his attendance and willingness to foster good relations between LCPC and KCC.</p>	Clerk to forward recent correspondence with Kent Highways to Cllr Simkins, by 12 th May.

		<p>Ashford Borough Councillor Clair Bell was able to report that ABC has now adopted a 'hybrid' model for meetings and decision-making, using online meetings software and streaming for public attendance. It has again set the lowest Borough/District level of Council Tax in Kent and projected its income and expenditure in a 5-year plan. Its development plans for Vicarage Lane and Lower High St in Ashford Town Centre are proceeding, and it is looking forward to inward investment in the town including a sustainable 'factory for the future' new-build. Its challenges include the halt imposed on new housebuilding Planning approvals by the Stodmarsh National Nature Reserve issue. This is being addressed by a project to achieve 'nutrient neutrality' along the River Great Stour involving strategic wetlands, in conjunction with other Councils, Natural England and the Environment Agency. ABC has joined the national effort to help refugees from the Ukrainian conflict, while preserving its current provision to address homelessness within the Borough. Cllr Bell concluded by mentioning the Community Governance Review underway by ABC, which gives an opportunity to restructure Parish, Town and Community Councils if a need is expressed.</p> <p>Councillors thanked Cllr Bell for her report. (At 19.34 Cllrs Simkins and Bell took their leave of the meeting)</p>	
6	Minutes of last meeting	The minutes of the Parish Council Meeting (no 86) on 8 th March 2022 were AGREED as a true record and signed by Cllr Brasier as the person presiding.	Clerk to place them in the Minutes Book & update website by 28 th May.
7	Matters arising	None.	
8	Committees and Outside Bodies	Kent Association of Local Councils (Ashford Area Committee) (KALC) – Cllr Brasier agreed to be LCPC representative for 22/23.	R Brasier to attend the KALC meeting on Thursday 12 th May.
At 19.38 Parish Councillor Scott Rivolta arrived			
8 (Continued)		<p>LCPC's Highways Improvement Plan Committee had not met since the previous Parish Council meeting in March. LCPC is awaiting a design statement from Kent Highways for the 20 mph zone in The Street. A review of the Swan Lane scheme, completed in FY21/22, concluded that it had been mostly successful in influencing driver behaviour around the hazardous T-junction and bend, helped by the reduced traffic flows during the COVID restrictions.</p> <p>The Little Chart Village Hall Management Committee (i.e. the Trustees of a registered charity) had sent in a request, dealt with in Correspondence (below). One of that Committee, acting in a personal capacity, had also asked LCPC for a contribution towards the costs of providing a Jubilee celebration at the Hall. After due debate, Councillors RESOLVED to make a payment of £100 to directly to Kaye Sowden in support of this event, under the usual grant-in-aid conditions.</p>	R Brasier to further email Kent Highways contact, as soon as convenient.
9	Delegations and Responsibilities	No delegated powers to the HIP Committee or the Clerk/RFO were discussed. Cllr Diebel agreed to take a particular interest in the Play Area, and Cllr Ladds a particular interest in the insurance carried by LCPC.	Clerk to forward completed insurance documents electronically to Cllr Ladds after renewal on 1 st June 2022.

10	Yearly Review of Policies	Councillors noted the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and other Council Policies applicable without alteration. The Parish Council retains the General Power of Competence (GPoC) under the Localism Act 2011.	R Brasier and Clerk to provide continuing review throughout 22/23.						
11	Financial Reports	<p>A. The Council considered the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 21/22 and RESOLVED to certify itself as exempt from the limited assurance review (external audit) under section 9 of <u>the Local Audit (Smaller Authorities) Regulations 2015</u>. The Chairman and the RFO duly signed the Certificate of Exemption.</p> <p>B. As RFO, Mr Sharpe reported that the most recent bank statement showed a balance of £18,096.85 with no outstanding cheques or income. The reconciliation with the RFO's receipts and payments account spreadsheet was then signed.</p> <p>C. The Council considered the cheques paid since the March meeting, and ratified them under LCPC Financial Regulation 6.6, as follows:</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="517 725 1190 864"> <tr> <td>M Sharpe, Clerk & RFO</td> <td>Quarterly Salary Jan- Apr 2022</td> <td>£384.09 no VAT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>HMRC</td> <td>Clerk Income tax Jan- Apr 2022</td> <td>£80.40 no VAT</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Council then RESOLVED to pay the following cheques as invoices/vouchers had been presented before this meeting was convened:</p> <p>KALC Membership 22/23 £154.10+ 30.82VAT£184.92 BHIB Ltd Insurance 22/23 £472.70 No VAT = £472.70 Kaye Sowden Jubilee Tea (as Minute 8 above) £100.00 5 CHEQUES TOTAL £1221.61</p> <p>Proposed R Brasier, seconded J Ladds.</p>	M Sharpe, Clerk & RFO	Quarterly Salary Jan- Apr 2022	£384.09 no VAT	HMRC	Clerk Income tax Jan- Apr 2022	£80.40 no VAT	<p>Clerk to scan and email the Certificate to PKF Littlejohn by 14th May, and place the remaining AGAR process documents on the agenda for the June meeting</p> <p>Clerk to post cheques post-haste.</p>
M Sharpe, Clerk & RFO	Quarterly Salary Jan- Apr 2022	£384.09 no VAT							
HMRC	Clerk Income tax Jan- Apr 2022	£80.40 no VAT							
12	Correspondence	A request had been received by email from the Village Hall Management Committee requesting permission to upgrade the guttering on the Village Hall. After due debate, the Council (freehold owner) RESOLVED to grant such permission to the VHMC & Public Guardian (leasehold owner) under the terms of the 'full repairing' lease dated 20th July 2005.	Clerk to communicate permission by email, by 20 th May.						
13	Parish Council Trees Inspection and Planting Plan 2022	<p>Councillors reviewed the insurance requirement for a safety inspection of trees on public land every 2 to 3 years, in the light of the continuing spread of ash die-back disease. Since the last comprehensive survey was done in February 2020, the Council RESOLVED to tender for a follow-up survey to be completed and acted upon during Summer/Autumn 2022. It also considered the availability of trees for planting from October.</p> <p>Councillors considered a query from the grass cutting contractor about the fallen tree in the 'new' churchyard, and RESOLVED to liaise with the Church of England (CofE) Parochial Church Council (PCC) for Calehill with Westwell Benefice to agree suitable action.</p>	<p>Clerk to request quotes for a follow-up report;</p> <p>Clerk to scope out opportunities for tree planting of suitable species on The Plantation and The Forstal;</p> <p>Clerk to contact Churchwarden to elicit landowner's response; and report all to June meeting.</p>						
14	Next Parish Council Meeting.	RESOLVED Wednesday 29 th June 7.30pm in the Village Hall to review AGAR before deadline.	Clerk to book venue and publicise, by 22 nd June						

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at 8.16 pm.