

NEWINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council held on 25 February 2025
in the Newington Room, Newington Village Hall

Present: Cllr Tony Mould (Chairman), Cllr Michael Barlow, Cllr Ruth Brown, Cllr Elaine Jackson, Cllr Eric Layer, Cllr Chris Palmer, Cllr Richard Palmer and Cllr Barbara Weight; and Mrs Wendy Licence (Clerk)

Also present were County Councillor Mike Baldock, Mr David Maher (Dandara Head of Planning), Mr Richard Dennis (Dandara Senior Design Manager) and five members of the public.

Cllr Mould welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1. COUNCILLOR VACANCIES

Cllr Mould informed Members that no applications have been received yet.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Absent: Cllr Stephen Harvey

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND LOBBYING

Cllr Brown declared a pecuniary interest in item 15, as her husband is employed by a lighting contractor.

4. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2025

i. To consider the minutes of the meetings and if in order sign as a true record

Cllr R Palmer **PROPOSED** to accept the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2025 as a true record; **SECONDED** by Cllr Barlow: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Mould duly signed the minutes.

ii. Matters arising from the minutes (except those issues appearing under specific headings)

24/504613/FULL The Pheasantry, Wardwell Lane Lower Halstow ME9 7ER:

Officer for response received. Cllr Harvey liaising with the officer for further information

Overgrown foliage in Bull Lane affecting streetlight: reported to KCC Highways, currently under investigation.

Overgrown foliage at phone box: reported to KCC Highways, foliage has been cut back.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The meeting was adjourned for the Public Question Time.

KCCllr Baldock left the room as he is also Chairman of Swale's Planning Committee; he did not listen to the discussion on Pond Farm and neither did he take part.

Mr Maher gave a brief presentation on the development framework design for the scheme at Pond Farm which the Planning Inspector gave planning permission for one hundred and thirty-five houses. Gladmans obtained the planning permission on 14 August 2023 and Dandara is the developer for the site.

Cllr Mould said the school is full, the hospital is full, the doctors' surgery is only part time; where is the infrastructure?

Mr Maher said that Dandara is only responsible for what is in the site. There is £2,800,000 index linked CIL money

Cllr Palmer said Gladmans had promised e-bikes and a car share scheme.

Mr Maher said that Dandara will deliver EV provision to every house; there is a travel plan with incentives.

#1- What will happen to the old farm buildings?

Mr Maher said that there is a condition for the retention and management of the buildings.

#2- The development comes out onto the A2, will there be an island and a crossing?

Mr Maher said there will be a puffin crossing.

#3- Where will the affordable houses go, will they be sited behind existing houses?

Mr Dennis said that these are the proposals which are being developed, nothing is set in stone. Dandara is trying to create different areas on the same site.

Mr Maher said Dandara is seeking to adhere to the framework plan at this stage.

#4- Will the affordable housing be sold to a London Borough?

Mr Maher said a contract will be entered into with a housing association which will be responsible for this.

Cllr C Palmer said Swale has just has a developer pull out of affordable housing; how many units will be affordable for a housing association to purchase?

Mr Maher said they had received a Notice of Intent from a housing association; they will manage the properties in perpetuity.

Cllr Barlow asked whether the houses could be moved nearer to the A2 and away from existing houses.

Mr Dennis said the development framework was not designed to build in that area.

Mr Maher said there is a condition in the planning permission.

Cllr R Palmer said that he is a Ward Member and would not sit on the Planning Committee for this scheme. There is outline planning permission, Dandara can come back with a design and layout which reflects the comments from residents. By listening to people, Dandara can make good adjustments and help residents.

#5- The mammal traps will not catch anything because it is the wrong time of the year.

Mr Dennis said the company is working with ecologists.

#6- The roads are chaotic; there are no e-bikes or car share facilities in the area; the station has reduced services. We would welcome Dandara to hold a public meeting on their proposals.

Cllr C Palmer asked if Dandara could arrange a public meeting, previous consultations have been well attended.

#7- Will the waste water go into the bore holes?

Mr Dennis said surface water will go into the bore holes; foul water will go into the public sewer in the A2.

#8- Will the Parish Council manage the open spaces?

Mr Dennis said the drainage experts are still developing a scheme.

Cllr R Palmer asked if the bio-diversity net gain will be achieved on site or off site?

Mr Dennis said it will be delivered on site.

Cllr Layer asked if the hedges and trees could be put between the existing houses and the new development. Why build directly behind existing houses? Why screen the open fields?

Cllr Mould said there is currently outline planning permission for the site, the screening could be changed.

Cllr Jackson asked if a footpath would be put in to join the track, the track is higher than the Pond Farm site. Permission would need to be sought from the owner of the track.

Mr Maher said that the intention is to have a footpath onto the track and this is being explored. Cllr Mould thanked everyone for attending.

KCCllr Baldock returned to the room.

6. VISITORS

i. Borough Councillors

SBCllr C Palmer reported that there had been complaints about construction vehicles going down Church Lane, this is a breach of planning permission and is being investigated. Bin collections were missed in Pear Tree Walk due to inconsiderate parking preventing the lorries from accessing the road; it has been suggested that narrower lorries are moved. Registration numbers will be taken and owners asked to park more considerately. The last resort would be to install yellow lines, but this would inconvenience residents.

A lot of planning applications are being lodged and there are more expected. We need to think of the bigger picture because this will affect local schools, hospitals and GPs; a Borough-wide approach must be taken. The planning applications for Highsted Park propose 8,400 houses and, if approved, will have a massive impact on local services as there would be a minimum of 16,000 extra residents in the borough. We will have to work together as a borough.

Cllr Mould thanked Cllr C Palmer for her report.

SBCllr R Palmer reported that he had attended the KALC Swale Area Committee; the Police are concerned with anti-social behaviour in Sittingbourne and also the problem of quad bikes in the parishes which will only get worse as the weather improves. The Police have a strategy to help combat the problems.

Swale Borough Council may disappear if devolution goes ahead; Kent County Council and Medway Council will have to work together to draft up a proposal for the unitary authorities.

CCTV- if the Parish Council were to proceed with a scheme, consideration will need to be given to where it could be sited. A visit to the CCTV control room could be arranged.

Potholes have been reported, and one was repaired within a few hours; a series of blocked drains on Boyces Hill have also been reported.

Cllr Mould thanked Cllr R Palmer for his report.

ii. County Councillor

KCCllr Baldock said there was little to report from the county perspective save that the budget had been agreed with a 4.992% increase in Council Tax.

At Swale Borough Council, the decision to stop the Swale West loneliness grant has been reversed and the website is up and running and receiving hits; the website can include details of events for parishes.

Cllr Mould thanked KCCllr Baldock for attending and for his report.

7. PLANNING

i. To receive an update

Cllr Brown reported that the proposal for Oak Hill House (24/504196/FULL) has been permitted and that Digswell (23/505840/FULL) had been dismissed.

ii. Ref: 25/500414/FULL

Address: 47 Bull Lane Newington Kent ME9 7LT

Proposal: Erection of a single storey rear extension, hip to gable loft conversion including 1no. rear dormer, 3no. roof lights and front porch.

Councillors considered the application and had no objections to the proposal and requested that neighbours' comments be taken into account.

8. AMENITIES

i. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 18 February 2025 and consider the recommendations

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the minutes of the meeting of the Amenities Committee held on 18 February 2025 as a true record. Cllr Layer duly signed the minutes.

Cllr Layer reported that the memorial bench has been installed. The village sign is being The Clerk reported that it will be returned next week and the company needs confirmation as to where it should be delivered.

Councillors agreed it should be stored in the garage pending a decision on which contractor should install it.

ACTION: Clerk

Cllr Layer reported that the trees have been cut back at the phone box. The Football Club has paid the lease fees.

Cllr Jackson expressed concern that the football pitch has not been lined.

Cllr Layer said the planters near Playstool Road have been planted up and receipts for expenses have been received. The Committee recommends that the scheme to install a practise basketball hoop should not be progressed due to the expense of the project and also a contractor advised the expense was unnecessary due to adequate provision within the ball court.

Cllr Layer **PROPOSED** not to proceed with installing an extra basketball hoop; **SECONDED** by Cllr C Palmer: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr Layer reported the tap at the cemetery has been reinstated following the water leak.

Cllr Layer said the litter pick will take place on 29 March.

The Clerk said the equipment has been ordered and will be delivered on the Friday before and collected on the Tuesday after the litter pick.

Cllr R Palmer agreed to receive the equipment.

Cllr Mould thanked Cllr layer for his report.

ii. To adopt the Recreation Ground Regulations

Cllr Layer **PROPOSED** to adopt the Recreation Ground Regulations as recommended by the Amenities Committee: **SECONDED** by Cllr Weight: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

iii. Review of Cemetery fees

Cllr Layer **PROPOSED** to accept the recommendation of the Amenities Committee to increase the Cemetery fees by 3% **SECONDED** by Cllr R Palmer: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

iv. To consider quotations to revamp the ashes area path

Cllr Mould **PROPOSED** to accept the quotation of £1,500 from ATS to block pave the area and install a Welby sundial, £199.99 as recommended by the Amenities Committee; **SECONDED** by Cllr Brown: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

v. To consider notice board quotations

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to accept the recommendation of the Amenities Committee to purchase a lockable notice board from Greenbarnes for £1,534. The lettering to be Arial font and in gold.

9. YOUTH CLUB

Cllr Jackson said that if the Council could get a grant for youth provision it could go ahead, £5675.40 is needed for the youth club for 8- 12-year-olds. Unfortunately, it would be difficult to justify spending over £12,000 when the Council has budgeted for a deficit. If the provision were to go ahead, the Council would ask Vibe to give year group presentations to the school and for the Pavilion to be left in a clean and tidy state.

Cllr Mould **PROPOSED** that the Council fund the youth club up to 50% of costs: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Cllr R Palmer **PROPOSED** that the Chair of Amenities be given the authority to make the decision subject to receiving 50% of the cost.

10. SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL LAND

There was no update.

11. VILLAGE VOICE AND MEDIA

Cllr Mould circulated a draft copy for comment; there will also be articles for the Allotments Association; the Bingo Club; and the Swale West Community Hub from KCCLlR Baldock.

12. FINANCE

i. Cheque list: to consider invoices for payment

Payee	Reason	Amount
Tracey Still	Pavilion cleaning	£175.00
Garden Care	Preparing plot for ashes interment	£85.00
Spy Alarms	Replacement battery	£54.00
Maylow Constructions Ltd	Installation of memorial bench	£588.00
Mr E Layer	Shackles	£14.29
DCK Accounting	Payroll fees – Feb	£36.00
Mr R Malone	Litter Picking Recreation Ground - Feb Litter Picking	£543.20
Mr MJ Marshall	Cemetery and Churchyard maintenance - Feb	£625.00
Mr R Burrows	Track gate keeper- Feb	£100.00
Administration	Expenses	£68.90
K Beeby	Expenses for the planters	£22.82

Cllr Layer **PROPOSED** to make the payments; **SECONDED** by Cllr R Palmer: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

ii. Finance report

No questions or comments had been raised.

iii. Any other finance matter received by 28 February 2025

Cllr Mould reported that the Clerk has secured a grant of £1,000 from the Parishes Support Grant: £200 for Newington Lunch Club, £200 for Newington Bingo Club and £600 for Cornerstone Café. The grants are to support people affected by isolation and loneliness and free training is available for the volunteers.

The Clerk was thanked for obtaining the grant.

Bank Accounts

NatWest:- 31.01.25 £49,175.52
 Nationwide:- 31.03.24 £46,923.62
 Unity Trust:- 31.01.25 £38,545.30

Receipts

02.01.25	H Heaton	Memorial bench	£1,176.39
02.01.25	J Wood	Cemetery fees	£394.00
14.01.25	J Wood	Grave digger fees	£85.00
28.01.25	Bredhurst Junior Football Club	Fees	£1,450.00

Payments

02.01.25	HugoFox	Website	£23.99
29.01.25	DRAX	Pavilion electricity	£33.70
28.01.25	NatWest	Credit card	£86.87

13. POLICIES**i. Review of Standing Orders**

It was **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to adopt the revised Standing Orders

ii. Parish Council protocol

Cllr Mould said that protocols need to be agreed for the Council; a draft will be sent out before the next meeting, the issues need to be dealt with.

iii. To pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge

Councillors considered the Civility and Respect Pledge which is designed to enable Councils to demonstrate their commitment to addressing poor behaviour and foster positive changes that support civil and respectful conduct.

Cllr Jackson said the pledge says training needs to be in place,

The Clerk said the Council has a Training Policy.

Cllr Mould **PROPOSED** the Council sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge; **SECONDED** by Cllr R Palmer: **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY**.

All Members present signed the pledge.

14. CHANGES IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Cllr R Palmer informed Councillors that there are a lot of rumours circulation about the changes in Local Government. The Government wants Unitary Authorities to be set up with 500,000 residents in them. The deadlines for Local Authorities to agree this is 21 March, however a consultation regarding the proposed changes will not take place until the summer. Kent County Council and Medway Council have not been able to agree on the boundaries. The election for Kent County Council will take place on 1 May.

15. STREETLIGHTS

Cllr C Palmer said some lights are out on the A2 and details need to be given to KCC Highways.

16. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS

There were no further reports.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

1. 30.03.25- NALC CEO bulletin

2. 31.01.25- KCC Highways: Emergency Road Closure - Wardwell Lane, Lower Halstow - 31st January 2025 *already circulated*

3. 03.02.25- JKC Policy round-up
4. 05.02.25- KALC newsletter
5. 05.02.25- KALC: Kent not accepted onto Devolution Priority Programme
6. 05.02.25- KALC: devolution update
7. 10.02.25- SBC: JKC Policy Round-Up
8. 12.02.25- KALC: bulletin
9. 12.02.25- KALC: training bulletin
10. 13.02.25- KCC Planning: Notice that Inspector's report on Kent County Council's Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 has been published. *NB at its meeting on 13 March 2025 KCC will decide whether to adopt the Plan*
11. 13.02.25- NALC CEO bulletin
12. 17.02.25- SBC: JKC Policy Round-Up
13. 17.02.25 - Refer Kent Newsletter
14. 17.02.25- invitation to Mayor's Charity Fundraising
15. 18.02.25- CPRE response
16. 20.02.25- NALC CEO bulletin
17. 20.02.25- KALC Weekly Bulletin

Councillors noted the response from CPRE and **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY** to rejoin at the rate of £60.

18. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Barlow asked that the Amenities Committee consider purchasing a ladder.

Cllr R Palmer asked if any Members were interested in visiting the CCTV control Centre.

ACTION: Cllr R Palmer to arrange the visit.

Cllr Weight reported that there were two hundred and fifty-two children on the school roll.

ACTION: Clerk to order VE-Day coins.

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 25 March 2025 at 7pm

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.15pm

Signed as a true record of the meeting

Chairman

Date: 25 March 2025