

MINUTES of a Meeting held at Dunton Green Pavilion on Tuesday 10th OCTOBER 2023 at 7.30pm

00. PUBLIC SESSION

None.

01. PRESENT / APOLOGIES

Present: Cllrs. Lockey, Hersey, Copeland, Parker, Lapham, Gomes-Chodyniecki, Norton Apologies: Cllrs. England, Carrol, Clack (SDC), In attendance: Tracy Godden (Clerk), Wendy Jackson (Bookings & Facilities Assistant), Cllr. Bayley (SDC), 2 Members of the Public

In the absence of the Parish Council Chairman, Cllr. Lockey (Vice Chairman) chaired the meeting.

02. CO-OPTION

Item deferred until after Item 17 - Correspondence.

03. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

It was Resolved to approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12th September 2023 as a true and accurate record.

04. REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None.

05. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN AGENDA ITEMS

Cllr. Lockey - Item 13.3 (Land to the East of Morants Court Road)

06. GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Learning Opportunities (Cllr & Staff): to consider what has been undertaken, booked and is available

The Clerk has attended a Finance Summit, a 'How to use Canva effectively' webinar, 'Scribefest' Conference and the KALC Clerks' Conference. Details of training opportunities have been forwarded to members.

6.2 To receive updates from Kent County and Sevenoaks District Councillors

Cllr. Bayley confirmed that SDC's biggest project is to save £1.4 million and to consider where SDC can save without cutting services. There are a number of significant cost increases that have contributed to the need to save: staff wages (estimated £600k increase, local government pay increases are yet to be agreed), bail out of the leisure centre and the continued increase in the amount of rubbish being collected (rubbish has doubled since Covid). Cllr, Bayley confirmed that there will be a new bus service (from hospital to Orpington and then to Dunton Green, Riverhead & Sevenoaks). There are likely to be 3 buses, an hour apart and they are expected to help alleviate school buses which have been oversubscribed. Cllr. Bayley was asked to check with Cllr. Chard (KCC) that bus passes (school) can be used on any of the services.

6.3 To consider purchase of graphics software to improve administration

The Clerk advised that a free version of Canva is currently used but that it is very limited. It was Resolved that an annual subscription be purchased at a cost of £100 to enable full access.

ACTION: CLERK

6.4 To consider purchase of cross cut shredder for the office to replace confidential waste bin The Clerk confirmed that the contract for the confidential waste bin had now ceased and that an alternative was required. It was Resolved that a cross cut shredder be purchased (budget maximum £300) for the office. ACTION: CLERK

07. DGPC REPRESENTATIVES – EXTERNAL BODIES

7.1 To consider feedback from any meetings attended by DGPC's representatives on external bodies and to note any meetings due to be attended

No meetings attended.

08. CLERK'S REPORT

Bookings Software

The Clerk and the Bookings & Facilities Assistant (BFA) had attended a virtual demo session of bookings software that the Parish Council's accounts package suppliers (Scribe) can provide. They had both felt that the software was over-engineered for what DGPC need and would create more work than it saved. It was also an expensive option (onboarding fee of £249 plus monthly charge of £29).

Regardless, it had been a useful session to understand what is and is not required of a bookings system. The objective is to try to automate via the website part of the bookings process, to free up some of the BFA's time for other tasks and projects. Other alternatives will be researched. ACTION: CLERK/BFA

Endangered species confirmed in Dunton Green

The Clerk had been informed that following a visit from the Environment Agency, it had been confirmed that there is a rare/endangered White Clawed Crayfish colony in Dunton Green. Details of location will not be disclosed for the safety of that colony (the only one in Kent, apparently), but it is encouraging that this has been officially recognised.

09. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SAFETY

9.1 Anti-Social Behaviour – to note or consider any issues brought to the attention of the Parish Council

It was noted that there had been a spate of ASB of the previous weekend (broken glass under the railway bridge on Station Approach, broken noticeboard and litter bin forced out of the ground in the recreation ground, issues at Ryewood and a burglary of a shed in Kingswood Road. Matters have been reported to the Police and to the Community Safety team at SDC.

9.2 DGPC funded Community Activities: to note updates regarding youth and senior activities and to consider any new proposals or initiatives

Basketball continues until December. Mini kickers has not started as was expected due to coach availability but will begin again in the New Year (advertising to be started in November). ACTION: CLERK

10. FINANCE

10.1 To receive a Bank Reconciliation (to the end of the previous month) and to acknowledge balance statement values have been verified.

The Clerk presented bank reconciliations (to 30th September), and it was Resolved that it be accepted. A Parish Councillor will verify all the bank balances stated on the reconciliations against the bank / investment statements.

BANK RECONCILIATION TO END 30/09/2023

Description	Value £	Value £
Cash in hand 01/04/2023		£117,495.28
ADD Receipts 01/04/2023 – 30/09/2023		£269,960.60
TOTAL		£387,455.88
SUBTRACT		

Payments 01/04/2023 - 30/09/2023		£102,967.08
A: Cash in hand 30/09/2023		£284,488.80
Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
NatWest Reserve 30/09/2023	£190,575.19	
NatWest Current 30/09/2023	£11,984.13	
CCLA Public Sector Deposit 30/09/2023	£41,929.48	
CCLA Local Authorities Property Fund 31/03/2023	£40,000.00	
TOTAL CASH IN HAND per Bank Statements		£284,488.80
Less unpresented cheques		£0.00
TOTAL		£284,488.80
Plus unpresented receipts		£0.00
B: Adjusted Bank Balance		£284,488.80

10.2 Budget 2024-25: to agree a date for a meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee to start discussions relating to the budget for 2024-25

The Clerk indicated that a meeting of the F&GP Committee was required for budget discussions to take place and to allow a formal adoption of a budget at the December meetings. The Clerk will circulate a suggested date to members of the committee.

ACTION: CLERK

11. DONATIONS 2023/24

11.1 To consider donations to be made to charitable organisations and groups for the current (2023/24) Financial Year, including consideration of suggestions for additional support measures for local organisations that DGPC works with, reflecting on impacts of the cost-of-living crisis

DONATIONS	2023-24
Citizens Advice in North & West Kent	£500.00
West Kent Mediation	£100.00
Kent Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance Trust	£200.00
RBL Poppy Appeal	£100.00
Kent Community Domestic Abuse Programme	£200.00
Sevenoaks-Samaritans	£200.00
West Kent Mind	£100.00
Victim Support	£100.00
Sevenoaks Volunteer Transport Group	£500.00
Holding On Letting Go	£100.00
Sevenoaks CFR	£400.00
Dunton Green Primary School PTA	£200.00
Sevenoaks Larder	£250.00*
Age UK Lunch Club (direct to volunteers)	£400.00
Baby Umbrella Charity	£300.00
We Are Beams Charity	£300.00
TOTAL DONATIONS	£3,990.00

It was Resolved to make the following donations/grants for the 2023/24 Financial Year:

* If the Sevenoaks Larder is still operating

GRANTS	2023-24
Age UK - specifically for Dunton Green Pop In	£1,000.00
TOTAL GRANTS	£1,000.00

ACTION: CLERK

Grants differ from donations in that donations tend to be much more general and flexible than grants. A donation can be used to support a nonprofit's programmes, services, or operating expenses. It is less common for a donation to have restrictions as to how the funds can be used.

Cllr. Bayley (SDC) leaves the meeting.

12. ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT

12.1 It was resolved to note expenditure for September and to approve items for payment in October. A list of cheques, Bank transfers and direct debits (with supporting documentation) was provided and verified & signed by two councillors.

Payment	Description	Net £	VAT £	Gross £
Туре				
	Payments (reported at September meeting in <i>italics</i>)	I	1	
DEBIT	Adobe Systems Software	16.64	0.00	16.64
CARD	Adobe Acrobat monthly subscription			
DD	Hiscox	446.37	0.00	446.37
	Annual Insurance Premium Monthly Payment			
BANK TFR	KCC (KCS)	82.52	16.50	99.02
	Photocopier			
BANK TFR	Last Minute Music	88.67	17.33	104.00
	Booking Deposit for Fireworks Event entertainer			
BANK TFR	Getting IT Working	150.00	0.00	150.00
	IT Support August 2023			
BANK TFR	Bishops Services Ltd (Bibby Factors Northwest Ltd)	962.08	192.42	1154.50
	Pavilion cleaning, jet washing August 2023			
BANK TFR	Gardens of England	3883.25	0.00	3883.25
	Grounds Maintenance August 2023			
BANK TFR	Tatsfield Aquatics Ltd	1876.00	375.20	2251.20
	Supply & installation of kissing gate fencing			
BANK TFR	Ciro Castello	285.00	0.00	285.00
	Fireworks Event entertainer (Bal direct to artist)	10000.00		1000.00
DEBIT	Able Electrical Ltd	10833.33	216.67	1300.00
CARD	Electrical Installation Conditional Report plus remedials	170.40	24.00	204.50
BANK TFR	SDC	170.42	34.08	204.50
DEDIT	Saturday Freighter July 23	22.20	6.67	20.00
DEBIT CARD	Amazon Clausticks for Eiroworks Evant	33.29	6.67	39.96
	Glowsticks for Fireworks Event	2047.95	0.00	2047.05
BANK TFRS	Staff Salaries & Expenses September 2023	3047.85	0.00	3047.85
DD	British Gas	28.42	1.42	29.84
00	Final Bill for Pavilion Gas	20.42	1.42	29.04
BANK TFR	Pyrovision Ltd	4458.00	891.60	5349.60
	Fireworks Display	4438.00	051.00	5545.00
BANK TFR	HMRC	2980.81	0.00	2980.81
27	Qtr 2 PAYE Tax & NI	2000.01	0.00	2000.01
DD	Peoples Partnership (Pension)	301.87	0.00	301.87
DD	SAGE UK Ltd	8.00	1.60	9.60
	Payroll software			
DD	Smartest Energy	119.04	5.95	124.99
	Pavilion Gas Supply (New Supplier)	_		
BANK TFR	Cube Plumbing & Heating Ltd	310.00	62.00	372.00
	Repair (no hot water – faulty valve)			
BANK TFR	KALC (Eventbrite)	70.00	14.00	84.00
	Clerk's Training (KALC Clerks' Conference)			

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BANK TFR	Spy Alarms Ltd	934.00	186.80	1120.80
	Intruder Maintenance & Dualcom Contract			
BANK TFR	Streetlights	880.02	176.00	1056.02
	Annual Maintenance Contract (payment 2/2)			
BANK TFR	Dunton Green Education In Full Foundation	763.87	0.00	763.87
	Donations from DGPC Fireworks Event			
October Pa	yments (expected but unconfirmed/not yet paid)			
DD	SAGE UK Ltd	8.00	1.60	9.60
	Payroll software			
DD	Peoples Partnership (Pension)	292.91	0.00	292.91
DD	Castle Water	50.40	0.00	50.40
	Pavilion Water			
DD	Npower (was E.ON)	69.24	3.46	72.70
	Unmetered Electricity Supply			
DD	Shred Station	41.93	8.39	50.32
	Confidential Waste Disposal Service (Sept)			
DD	Smartest Energy	194.32	9.72	204.04
	Pavilion Gas Supply (New Supplier)			

ACTION: CLERK

13. PLANNING

13.1a Planning Application 23/02768/HOUSE

Location: Fallowfield Rye Lane

Development: Demolition of existing garage and conservatory. Construction of new single storey side extension. New roof on existing extension. Rooflights. New steps. Alterations to fenestration.

Recommendation: Comments Only.

It was Resolved that the Parish Council will resubmit comments as per the previous application for this site, as follows:

In principle the Parish Council does not support development of Green Belt sites. There are also concerns that the proposal may exceed what is the limit of an acceptable increase on the footprint of the original house (something that DGPC expects SDC to consider and clarify).

ACTION: CLERK

13.2 PLANNING NOTIFICATIONS To note the decisions from SDC or the Planning Inspectorate.

13.2a Planning Application 23/01934/HOUSE

Location: Fallowfield Rye Lane

Development: Demolition of existing garage and conservatory. Construction of new single storey side extension. New roof on existing extension. Rooflights. New steps. Alterations to fenestration.

WITHDRAWAL OF APPLICATION

13.2b Planning Application 23/02205/HOUSE

Location: Waterside 13 Mill Road

Development: Proposed loft conversion with dormer window to rear elevation and 3 No rooflight windows to front elevation.

GRANT OF PLANNING PERMISSION: Subject to conditions

16.1 Land to the East of Morants Court Road – to note recent activities on land

Cllr. Lockey provided an update on the situation. The Environment Agency (EA) is visiting regularly. There continues to be an issue with lorries appearing to arrive at the site, seemingly depositing material rather than removing material. Evidence gathering is ongoing.

This situation has been developing over the last year and whilst the EA and SDC Enforcement Officers have been involved, little has changed and more material is being brought to the site. The land is subject to an Article 4 Directive and yet nothing seems to be being actioned under that.

The right of way across the public highway (as vehicles have to cross over a footpath) has to be verified with KCC as passing over it may be prohibited.

The Clerk is to write to all parties (EA, SDC & KCC) to raise questions and concerns. **ACTION: CLERK**

13.4 Chevening Estate Parkland Scheme Liaison Board - to note information from first meeting

The Clerk had attended this meeting on behalf of DGPC. The meeting had been arranged by the Chevening Estate Manager and was attended by Rural Arisings (the company overseeing all of the works for the scheme), Cllr Simon Reay (SDC), one Chevening PC representative and a Chevening resident. Detail of preparation works to be undertaken over the next six months were shared. For Dunton Green, the main concern is vehicles for the scheme potentially travelling through Dunton Green. Initial preparation works are not expected to impact the village; vehicle movements will significantly increase once the scheme proper commences in Spring/Summer 2024. The scheme is expected to take 5-6 years to complete. Concerns were raised by Chevening parties regarding the speed limit on the road from the roundabout past Turvins Farm (which is currently 60mph) and Cllr Reay indicated he would follow up with KCC on this. The next meeting of the Liaison Board o sot expected before Spring 2024, when an assessment of progress to date will be provided.

13.5 McCarthy Stone development – to note restart of construction and resident concerns about fencing

It was noted that after a period of some months of inactivity (awaiting permissions from the Environment Agency) that work had resumed on site. Residents had now raised concerns that hoarding was being erected which they believed would block site lines when exiting Mill Road. The Clerk had raised this with KCC and SDC reported that the Planning Department had confirmed that there were conditions applied to where hoardings could be placed and that they would monitor the situation if it was felt that the hoardings had been placed incorrectly.

13.6 Local Plan: to note that the next stage of consultation by SDC is due from November

The Clerk confirmed that the next stage of consultation was due to start in November and last eight weeks over the Christmas period. It would be important to share details and timings with the public as soon as they are confirmed so that residents have an opportunity to comment.

ACTION: CLERK

Councillors did feel that better use of empty homes across the country could be made to reduce the need for more building. However, the targets are as prescribed by the Government and the Local Plan will have to set out how those targets will be met.

14. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND COMMUNITY AMENITIES

14.1 Recreation Ground

14.1a To note damage to new boundary fencing

It was noted that within a day or so of the new railings either side of the kissing gate being installed they had been rocked loose. There had been some negative comments to the contractors on the day they were installed and unfortunately the resultant damage was not entirely a surprise. The contractors have since been back to site and had reinforced the installation (at no additional cost).

14.1b Play Equipment: to receive an update and consider quotations

Further to the last meeting, a quotation for supply and installation of two items of equipment had been received with a reduction of £240 plus VAT (reduced delivery charge). The Bookings & Facilities Assistant (BFA) is seeking a further comparative quote that will include removal of the defunct piece of kit as well (having had no response from the local scarp merchant), as this is not included at all in the current quotation.

ACTION: CLERK

14.2 Pavilion

14.2a To note damage to the defibrillator cabinet (and note replacement ordered)

Noted.

14.2b To note issues with hot water and leaking changing room toilet Noted.

14.2c Gas meter cabinet - to note damage ad suggestions for repair

The Clerk explained that the BFA had been unable to open the gas meter cabinet, the door apparently stuck fast. It seemed likely that in forcing the door open, some damage might occur, and a new cabinet cover was being sought.

ACTION: CLERK/BFA

14.3 Other

14.3a To note that a new Village Green Tree has been pre-ordered Noted. Delivery is not expected before the end of November and the tree is expected to be 3.0-3.5m tall.

14.3b Village Green Electricity Supply Project: progress update if available

The Clerk informed members that a response had not yet been provided by a third-party contractor who may be able to complete some of the UKPN non-mandatory works. The Clerk was asked to follow up with regard to whether the supply to the cabinets would be metered or unmetered (unmetered preferred as it would not incur standing charges).

ACTION: CLERK

14.3c To consider 'Plan B' suggestions for Christmas lights 2023

Given that it will not be possible to have a power supply for lights, the Parish Council is in the same position as last year. The Clerk will contact the electricians with regard to Christmas Tree lights installation and the possible addition of some coloured lights on the tree.

Councillors liked lights in or around the hanging basket columns, but it had been difficult to install them last year and they had not lasted very long. There were some suggestions of potential sources of battery-operated lights that could be used, and the Clerk would follow up. A platform/ladder is being purchased to make installation safer and easier.

ACTION: CLERK

14.3d Price's Wood – to note a tree has fallen and that works have been scheduled for December Noted. It was mentioned that there might be another tree that needs attention (and the Clerk was asked to speak to the contractor about this). ACTION: CLERK

15. HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION (INFRASTRUCTURE)

15.1 Highways Improvement Plan (HIP): to note updates, if any and resident requests for traffic calming

There has been no progress against the HIP over the previous month. It was noted that there had been a number of correspondences from residents raising concerns about speeds on Morants Court Road and old London Road. The Clerk had responded to confirm that DGPC has made various requests for speed reductions that KCC had vetoed.

15.2 Bus Provision: to note SDC councillor efforts to introduce a new service and to consider writing to KCC in support of a route

It was noted that this item was now obsolete as the new bus service has been agreed (as reported by Cllr. Bayley in Item 6.2.

16.1 KCC Parish Salt Bags – to consider practicalities of a one tonne bag

Members agreed that it was not practical to accept a one tonne bag and that there were no resources to decant into smaller, more manageable bag sizes or anywhere to safely store the slat for proper use on the public highway. The Clerk indicate this to KCC.

16. EVENTS

16.1 DGPC Events: to note/consider feedback/updates/requirements:

16.1a Annual Fireworks event (30th September) – to review event and note learnings The event had been very well received on the night by the families that had attended. It was felt that the organisation of the event had been good but there were areas where improvements could be made. These were largely around communication. It was agreed that a meeting between Cllr. Parker, the Clerk and the BFA had been very useful to go through the organisational steps and that some form of informal pre-event meeting should be arranged in the future for all of the volunteers to attend, so that everyone is aware of what their role is on the day.

Cllr. Parker will update the firework event planning document and send a copy to the Clerk for keeping centrally. The Clerk will look to book fireworks, entertainment and first aid cover as soon as the budget planning process has been completed and a budget for the event has been agreed. ACTION: DP/CLERK

16.1b Remembrance Sunday (12th November) – to agree schedule for the event

The Clerk has provided Cllr. Parker with a draft version of the Master Schedule for the Order of Service. The objective is to have a selection of services that can be used in rotation. The Master Schedule is also used as the basis for the printed version of the Order of Service for the day. Cllr. Parker is to review poems/readings that might be changed, suggestions being given to the Clerk by 23rd October. Cllr. Lockey will check the PA kit and prepare a step-by-step guide to how to use this (that can then be typed up, laminated and kept with the kit for ease of use by anyone).

ACTION: DP/PL/CLERK

16.1c Christmas Event (Friday 15th December)– to agree scope of event and identify volunteers

The event will largely take the same shape as last year although issues regarding electricity supply for the PA system need to be ironed out. The Clerk will speak with the electrical contractors, but it was conceded that a 'dry run' prior to the event day would be a sensible precaution, to ensure that everything is working as it should be in advance of the event itself. The Clerk will contact non-DGPC volunteers to establish whether they would be willing and able to assist with this event. The Events WhatsApp group for volunteers should be kept (although it will need all DGPC councillors to be included, where possible, so that they are aware of the communications).

ACTION: ALL/CLERK

Cllr. Gomes-Chodyniecki leaves the meeting.

17. CORRESPONDENCE

17.1 Members considered or noted correspondence received since the September 2023 meeting

17.1a Clerks & Councils Direct – September 2023

17.1b Local Councils Update – October 2023

17.1c Slow Ways [Email] – Request to help contribute to a community verified national walking network

Details to be forwarded to members.

ACTION: CLERK

17.1d SDC [Email] – SDC Taxi Licensing Policy Consultation (deadline 12/11/23)

17.1d CPRE [Magazine] – Countryside Voices Autmn/Winter 2023

17.1e RACE (Rural and Community Housing Enabling Service [Email] – Webinar session about what they do (8/11 12.30-1.30pm)

17.1f Zero Hour [Email] – Request for DGPC to support Climate and Ecology Bill

17.1g KCC [Email] – Consultation Report available re Sevenoaks Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Route

survey

17.1h Kent Wildlife Trust [Email] – Pollinator Action Plans for parish councils 17.1i KCC [Email] – High Weald AONB Management Plan 2024-29 Consultation (deadline 5/11/23)

02. CO-OPTION

Guy Forster-Pearce had applied to be co-opted as a DGPC Councillor which members had considered. Mr Forster-Pearce introduced himself and explained his interest in getting involved, answering questions from councillors.

It was unanimously Resolved that Guy Forster-Pearce be co-opted as a member of Dunton Green Parish Council. A Declaration of Acceptance of Office form was signed (witnessed by the Clerk).

The Clerk confirmed that she would forward relevant papers in the coming days & weeks. **ACTION: CLERK**

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

18.1 November 14th, 2023 (7.30pm) – Dunton Green Pavilion

19. PUBLIC SESSION

None.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.