

MINUTES OF A REMOTE MEETING OF BRENCHLEY AND MATFIELD PARISH COUNCIL

HELD ON MONDAY 1st JUNE 2020 AT 7.30pm via Zoom

Present: Councillors L. Butler (presided), G. Warner, K. Sparkhall, G. Stevenson, A. de Guingand, Ms. C. Brooks (Clerk), Ms. P. Horn (RFO)

In attendance: Cllr. J. March (TWBC), Cllr. S. Hamilton (KCC), Four members of the public.

1. Election of a Chairman for the meeting

The Clerk invited Cllr de Guingand to preside and request nominations for Chair. Cllr. Butler was nominated by Cllr, Sparkhall and was elected unanimously.

Cllr de Guingand invited Cllr. Butler to take the Chair.

2. To accept apologies for absence

The Council accepted apologies from Cllr. Woodley who was unable to attend the meeting.

3. To confirm the Record of Actions

The Records of Actions, as provided for under the Scheme of Delegation, have been published for the months of March and April, the record for May actions was circulated. All were agreed as an accurate record and shall be signed by the Chairman at the next meeting of the Council in person.

4. To record declarations of interest in any item on the Agenda

Cllr. Warner declared an interest in the Planning Application item 10.4 and did not participate.

5. To adjourn to allow public participation

Amanda Wells thanked the Council for setting up the remote meeting and facilitating public participation. She raised the open letter in local press signed by local businesses calling on TWBC and KCC regarding on the need to reduce carbon emissions and review the transport system to protect the environment including a safe path between the two villages in the parish.

Cllr Butler advised that many of these issues are being addressed in the NDP policies. Cllr March advised that the Public Street Scene money from Government will amount to £1.6 to KCC therefore the amount for TWBC will be £130k. The schemes under discussion tend to be where there is greatest footfall to allow social distancing and give priority to pedestrians and cyclists such as one way markings on pavements and modal filters at junctions.

6. Borough and County Councillor

TWBC – Cllr March advised that TWBC are working in emergency measures still and have just started a Covid 19 panel to make sure that services such as Food Banks and Refuse Collections are continuing.

KCC – Cllr Hamilton advised that finance is very tight for the county but that any requests for strategic changes to infrastructure be forwarded to her.

7. Rescinding of the Scheme of Delegation

The Clerk outlined that the Council had adopted a Scheme of Delegation on 31st March 2020 to permit its ongoing activities during the constraints of the Covid-19 pandemic and advised the Council that with meetings now being convened via Zoom it could be rescinded so that residents were fully aware how decisions would be made.

RESOLVED that the Scheme of Delegation adopted on 31st March remain in place but that it be amended to demonstrate that remote meetings would now take place.

8. To approve Audit and Accounts 2019-20

The Clerk outlined that following the Year End March 31st, 2020, and the Internal Audit on 20th April, the Internal Audit Report (Page 3) has been signed by the Internal Auditor.

8.1 Annual Governance Statement 2019-20

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they must satisfy themselves that all statements in Section 1 (page 4) are agreed.

RESOLVED that the Chairman (as elected for this meeting) and Clerk may sign and submit the Annual Governance Statement 2019-20

8.2 Accounting Statements 2019-20

The Clerk reminded Councillors that they must satisfy themselves that the accounting statements in Section 2 (page 5) as presented are in accordance with the agreed accounts for the year.

RESOLVED that the Chairman (as elected for this meeting) and the Responsible Finance Officer may sign and submit the Accounting Statements for 2019-20

9. Certificate of Compliance regarding a Title Restriction at the Old Palace, Brenchley

The Council discussed a request from the owner of the Old Palace, High Street, Brenchley to provide a certificate of compliance in anticipation of a conveyance of the title. It was noted that the address of the Council on the documents needs to be updated.

RESOLVED that the Clerk signs a certificate of compliance of the leaseholders at the Old Palace, Brenchley.

10. Planning and Development

10.1 Rydon Development Complaint

Following complaints about the installation of railings on Maidstone Road, Cllr. Woodley has written to Stephen Baughen, to express the Council's concerns, a response is awaited from Peter Hockney at TWBC.

Cllr March was asked to follow this up.

10.2 Neighbourhood Development Plan:

Cllr Sparkhall provided an update on the progress of the NDP. The Steering Group is continuing to work on the draft and to engage with TWBC, there is a further meeting of the NDP SG on 15th June. Feedback from Fera and TWBC on the current draft NP suggested that the evidence base should be strengthened with surveys (such as Housing Needs and Business Survey). It was agreed that a Housing Needs Survey could be progressed, as the original budget had allocated significant expenditure on consultants to assist in the preparation of the Draft Neighbourhood Plan. This work has been carried out instead by the Steering Group and Cllr. Sparkhall suggested that reasonable expenditure could be made within the original budget agreed by the PC. Cllr Butler advised that the administrator of the NDP budget would submit a revised report on expenditure to the next PC meeting.

10.3 Draft Local Plan

Cllr Warner suggested that there will be an update on the TWBC Local Development Scheme, with a delay of six months to the date for Regulation 19 Consultation and a change in the base date of the Local Plan to 2020. Cllr March advised that no information on this had yet been published. It was suggested that Cllr Warner would contact Alan McDermott with the PC's queries on the implications for the number of houses already built.

10.4 Planning Applications

20/01199 Woodlands Farm Short Lane Brenchley Tonbridge Kent TN12 7BA	Extension to sand school for livery RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND: APPROVE
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11. Brenchley Archive

Further to the Council's annual financial support grant, an Annual Report and accounts for 2019-20 from Kevin Sparkhall was discussed.

12. Brenchley Charities

The RFO provided minutes of the meetings of both Charities. She confirmed that the War Memorial Charity has been closed. The RFO confirmed that Helen Brown had been approached to become a trustee of the John Downer Charity, alongside the RFO, the Clerk and Cllr Butler, given that she is aware of the process of allocating beneficiaries.

The RFO confirmed that last year the amount of money received was less than expenditure for the first time and the difference covered by reserves.

There appears to be no legal reason for the charity to remain under the Parish Council or for any Trustee to be a councillor though this has been the case for many years.

The RFO will provide a further update.

13. Speed Surveys

Cllr. Stevenson outlined a recommendation for expenditure on the traffic surveys identified by the Highways Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED for Petteridge Lane Speed surveys to be commissioned at a suitable time, during school term and when traffic patterns have reverted to normal, at the cheapest quote of £395.

14. Microshade VSM Data Storage

The Clerk outlined issues related to the remote working between herself and the RFO. Due to the difficulties in the sharing of data the Clerk had obtained recommendations and a quote from the Rialtas and from other Parish Councils using a similar system of data sharing via Microshade VSM. The cost of this was outlined and long term costs would be £89.60 per month for hosted application service.

RESOLVED that the Council enters into a three-year agreement with Microshade VSM for its data storage.

15. Policies

Cllr. Butler, the Council's Health and Safety Officer, recommended the re-adoption of the Health and Safety Policy unamended.

RESOLVED to re-adopt the Health and Safety Policy unamended.

16. Casual Vacancy with a view to Co-Option

Cllr Butler raised the suggestion that the Council should seek to co-opt further members given the number of Councillors has reduced to six. The Clerk outlined that a vacancy notice may be published however if an election is requested (by ten or more electors) within 14 days of the notice being published, a poll cannot currently take place until 6 May 2021 as a result of the Local Government and Police and Crime Commissioner (Coronavirus) (Postponement of Elections and Referendums) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 and the Coronavirus Act 2020. Furthermore, an election to fill a casual vacancy may not take place within 6 months of a full Council election.

There was a discussion on how to promote the co-option in the parish and the Clerk reminded the Council that there is an adopted Procedure for Co-Option already in place. However, the Council would seek to review and re-draft this at a later meeting, before the co-option would proceed.

The Clerk was asked to inform TWBC that four casual vacancies are available.

17. Market Heath Close

Correspondence received from a resident concerning the area around the rental properties in Market Heath Close was discussed. The natural hedge to the south of the site has been broken down by panels of fencing.

RESOLVED that the Chairman of the Parish Council (as at this meeting) write to Town and Country and TWBC to request action is taken to clear the area around their properties in Market Heath Close.

18. Parish Footpaths with Stiles

Cllr Stevenson advised that he had been asked by a resident in the interests of modern DDA and accessibility requirements, that the PC consult with KCC Highways about seeking over a period of time, to get existing difficult to navigate stiles on footpaths, changed into more appropriate but secure “kissing gates”, which would mean that those walkers with less mobility can more easily traverse these footpaths.

The Chair invited Judi Perry, a resident, to contribute to this discussion.

It was agreed that Cllr Stevenson would progress a footpath and stile survey.

19. Matfield Pavilion

Cllr Butler raised the possibility of the opening of the Pavilion – to enable use by the cricketers. The Clerk commented that as the owners of the Pavilion a Risk Assessment would be required by the Parish Council, particularly if members of staff were also to use the premises.

It was agreed that the Pavilion would remain closed for the time being and that Cllr Butler will circulate information on the possibilities for opening it to the public and staff to next meeting.

20. Clerk’s Report

20.1 Data Protection Officer

The Clerk advised that the Council’s DPO, Jayne Cole at LCPAS, has ceased trading and therefore the Council will need to consider the appointment of a new DPO. A quote for these services had been obtained from GDPR-Info Ltd and this was discussed. It was agreed that Councillors would not require training as part of the contract and a reduction in the quoted annual fee, which included training, would be discussed with GDPR-Info Ltd.

RESOLVED to appoint GDPR – info ltd. as the Council’s Data Protection Officer for one year.

20.2 RFO’s Report

Recommendations for second bank account.

The RFO outlined options to protect the Council’s funds held in reserve which are currently over the bank risk limit of £85k.

It was agreed that the RFO would provide a specific recommendation to the Council

20.3 Accounts payable

The accounts, as attached, were approved and would be authorised by Cllr Butler and Cllr Stevenson.

1652 C. Brooks	Part Salary May 2020	£620.86
1653 HMRC	Tax and NI May 2020	£557.32
1654 P. Horn	Salary May 2020	£486.24
1655 TSOHOST	SSL Certificate	£49.99
1656 InfinityTech Solutions	Cloud storage contract cancelled	£164.16
1657 Streetlights	Street Lighting Contract	£653.75
1658 Jo Moffat	VE expenditure reimbursed	£106.39
1659 P Horn	Reimbursement of Norton Security Software for laptop	£29.99
1660 B. Murton	Professional fees for smart research	£6.00
1661 David Izzard	Jack V. Maintenance April and May 2020	£50.00
Credit Card Payment		
Amazon	Printer Ink for C.Brooks	£54.45

Standing Orders and Direct Debits		
SO C Brooks	Part Salary May 2020	£1000.00
SO Capel Ground Care	Mowing Contract Jan 2019-Dec 2021	£796.00
DD Smart Pension	Pension May 2020	£176.85
DD EDF Energy	Electricity 8/2 to 22/5	£325.18
DD Castle Water	Pavilion Water	£4.00
DD Castle Water	Pond Water	£4.00
DD Castle Water	Allotment water	£6.00

21. **Meetings attended, and reports by Councillors**
22. **To be advised of urgent Business as may be previously notified**
23. **Date of next meeting**
Monday 6th July 2020, 7.30pm, by remote session