

**BOUGHTON MALHERBE PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2012 at 7.30pm  
in Grafty Green Village Hall

**PRESENT- Councillors:** Mr R Turner (Chairman)  
Mr R Galton  
Mrs S Close  
Mr S Wickens  
Mrs P Anderson (Clerk)  
Mrs C King (Clerk to be)

Cllr Jenny Gibson

5 Members of the Public

**1. TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Mike Hitchins, Councillor Jenny Whittle and PCSO Alan Beech; no apologies were received from Richard Thick.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REGISTER OF INTEREST CHANGES**

There were no declarations of Interest and no Register of Interest changes.

**3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2012 having previously been distributed were unanimously **agreed** the official copy was signed as a true record by the Chairman.

**4. LOCAL POLICING**

**4.1 Police Report**

PCSO Alan Beech was unable to attend the meeting due to illness in his family. PA had been able to obtain the Crime figures and although she had not been able to print them off for the meeting it was agreed that they could be inserted after the meeting.

**Crime Figures:**

Feb	2	Theft - Dwelling
Mar	1	Burglary - Dwelling
	1	Theft - Motor Vehicle
	2	Theft - Chilston Park
	1	Theft - Dwelling

The PC who had supplied the crime figures was keen to draw attention to the fact that there had been an increase in oil theft in remote dwellings (2-3 over the last month). The Vice-Chairman mentioned how efficient Oil Tank alarms were and even though they cost around £100 this could save many times more than in stolen oil. Ulcombe Church has had lead stolen from the roof and other similar properties may be vulnerable, because of this patrols around churches have been increased. Ron Galton added that oil tank alarms were a good idea and although the initial outlay was around £100 which was indeed a lot of money, pointed out that in the long run it could save a lot more.

**4.2 Speedwatch**

PA read out a report from Keith Anderson:

The new National Speedwatch Software and Database has been received and installed. The operation of data inputting has been made much easier and will also be able to match speeding motorists across other counties which it previously couldn't.

To date Grafty Green Speedwatch has 7 trained Speedwatch parishioners.

Over the last 2 weeks we have recorded over 25 vehicles travelling in excess of 36 mph, 2 over 50mph!

Speedwatch will carry on now week after week and in conjunction with the plans to install a 30mph interactive sign it is hoped that speeding vehicles will be minimal.

Just for information a news release had been received yesterday thanking everyone for their patience in having to wait for the new Speedwatch Template. In just 2 months many more 'cross border' 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> time speeding detections have been registered than expected.

It was encouraging to at last receive some kind of communication regarding speedwatch efforts.

## 5. HIGHWAY & FOOTWAY MATTERS

### 5.1 Potholes(Rd to Egerton,Lewsome Lane Woodcock Lane) & Road Slippage

The Clerk reported that at last the final pothole in Woodcock Lane had been repaired, the pothole on the road to Egerton will be done in April and the Lewsome Lane pothole will be repaired this week, but would only be made safe, because the road is narrow it will need to be closed this has been applied for but will take up to 6 weeks to get the permission. Chris Wheal had reported that as much as possible had been done with regard to the road slippage and he will continue to monitor the safety issues. The verge by Grafty Garden Centre is now several inches below the road surface, it's on a bend and is quite dangerous.

**ACTION PA/CK**

### 5.2 Gully & Carriageway below Stream Farm

PA reported that following a meeting she had had with Alastair Coleman he had advised that the drainage/surface water issue would be investigated when the hill is closed to carry out patching. Hopefully all issues will be sorted out at that time but was not sure when this would happen.

**ACTION PA/CK**

### 5.3 Water Leak – Liverton Hill

For the most part Liverton Hill is virtually dry and free of leaks especially at the top end, any small leaks further down would be dealt with at such times as the hill is close, as above.

**ACTION PA/CK**

### 5.4 Liverton Hill – HGV's

Nothing further to report at the current time.

**ACTION PA/CK**

### 5.5 Bowley Lane signs

These have been erected and are now complete.

### 5.6 Grass Verges Woodcock Lane

Kent Highways have been out and consider that the stones are not a safety hazard. The matter is now closed.

### 5.7 Liverton Hill Sign Boards

All done.

### 5.8 Speed Indicator Device

Since the last meeting PA reported that she had contact Ben Hilden the Transportation Engineer to find out the cost of such a device and at the same time had contacted Jenny Whittle to see if there might be monies available from her Member's Highway Fund. As Ben Hilden was in the middle of ordering a few signs he had managed to secure a special price of £3500 per sign which would be a flashing 30mph sign, JW had advised that there would 50% of the cost available from the 2012/13 MHF. We needed to confirm within 5 days to secure the special price. The Parish Councillors had been contacted and all **Agreed** that we should go ahead. The order has since been placed. PA was asked in the meantime to find out how the sign will be sited and whether it will be necessary to insure it.

**ACTION PA/CK**

### 5.9 Water Leak junction Eastwood Rd/Headcorn Rd

The clerk reported that the day after her meeting with Alastair leak had stopped, he had since Told her that he was unable to take the credit for this, on the day we had met a contractor was in the front garden at the Oaks repairing a broken pipe for a 'grey water system' that they have and this was the cause.

### 5.10 Rubbish in Church Road

This had now been dealt with.

## 6. RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

### 6.1 No. 59 Bus

John Collins had advised the Clerk that with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April that on non schooldays there would be no 0721 service from Grafty Green or 1610 service from Maidstone, plus the 1725 service is to be completely withdrawn on all days. This would mean that the service cannot be used by anyone travelling to and from work. School children would have no fall back if they miss the 1610 or have after school activities. The Saturday service supported by KCC remains, of course, ironically far superior yet of much less value. Jenny Whittle has become involved. **'STOP PRESS'** since the meeting PA had been informed that these decisions had been reversed and things would be staying as they were. All we need to do now is to continue to support our bus service **'USE IT OR LOSE IT'**

**ACTION PA/CK**

**6.2 Emergency Plan**

A meeting had taken place to formulate an Emergency Plan with the Clerk, the Chairman, the Vice Chairman and the incoming Clerk; a few points had been discussed. It was decided that before much more was done, Parishioners should be asked if they would like to take part. A notice was put in the magazine and on the Notice Board asking for volunteers, only one reply had been received and that was from Chris Wheal. Another meeting would soon be arranged to continue with this.

**ACTION PA/CK**

**6.3 Diamond Jubilee**

Lots of plans afoot for the celebrations with a meeting coming up shortly in the Village Hall. A new provider of the Hog Roast is currently being sought, but apart from that everything is in hand.

**7. PUBLIC SESSION**

Joan Davidson reported that the Church would also be doing something for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. This would be a footpaths walk followed by a Cream Tea.

It was reported that a large amount of tyres had been dumped in Church Road

**ACTION PA/CK**

**8. PLANNING**

**8.1 Planning Applications Received**

The following applications were considered and recommendations made:

**8.1.1 Land at East Lenham Farm, Lenham Road, ME17 2DP MA/12/0013**

Construction of 5MW photovoltaic park including attendant infrastructure and associated works.  
Recommendation: No objection

**8.1.2 Judge House Farm, Woodcock Lane, Boughton Malherbe -MA/11/1921**

Application for erection of a three bay, two storey agricultural store to be used for storage & parking. – this had been received at the last meeting. PA had been advised since that the storage was to be used for equestrian tack storage and not agricultural as previously stated.

**Wording had now changed to:**

Erection of a three bay, two storey building to be used for parking of vehicles associated with the nearby holiday cottages and/or farm; and the storage of equestrian related tack and equipment.

Recommendation: No objection but re-iterate that a condition be put on that the 1<sup>st</sup> floor must not be used for any purpose other than a store, and if in the future there was a requirement for accommodation a new application should be submitted

**8.2 Planning Decisions Received**

The following Decisions received from MBC were **Noted**:

**8.2.1 Wrens Nest, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green, ME17 2AP – MA/11/1782**

Application to discharge conditions relating to MA/11.1250 & MA/11/1249  
MBC: Approved/Granted

**8.2.2 The Bell House, Sandway, Boughton Malherbe ME17 2BD – MA/11/1870**

Application to discharge conditions relating to MA/11/0261  
MBC: Approved/Granted with Conditions

**8.2.2 The Barn, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green, ME17 2AP– MA11/2056**

Listed Building Consent for re-instatement of fire damage to timber framed building  
MBC: Approved/Granted with Conditions

**9. CORRESPONDENCE – The following correspondence was Noted:**

MBC – Joint Transportation Board Meetings 2012/13

MBC – Land Request Public Gypsy & Traveller Site

KALC – Agenda 21<sup>st</sup> March and proposed dates of meetings.

South East Water – Notification of Restrictions on water use

St Nicholas Church – Thank you letter for supply of gates in field opposite church

KCC – Parish Council Legal Scheme

**10. MATTERS OF REPORT – To receive reports from**

**10.1 County & Borough Councillors**

**Jenny Whittle**

As advised Jenny was unable to attend. She did however send an email regarding the interactive sign details as already mentioned. She also said that on April 1<sup>st</sup> a Traffic Regulation Order would be

advertised for changing the speed limit. PA was asked to find out exactly what it might change to and what area it would cover.

**Post Meeting Information:**

The revised speed limit proposal of 30mph will run from the top of Liverton Hill right through to Grafty.

**Jenny Gibson**

Jenny reported that Maidstone's budget was now set. There had been very stringent cutbacks on lots of things such as diary inserts food after meetings and although small silly items they soon add up. Chris Garland very pleased with what has been achieved i.e. the Museum, Mote Park; more people are satisfied with things like re-cycling. Jenny feels very strongly that if we want monies for things then it should be raised through Precept.

The Local Strategies Plan is being collated, and although it doesn't affect us it does Headcorn. The plan is to build 1000 houses across the Rural Service Centres, included in that count would be anything built from 2006.

The Chairman asked Jenny about the new gates at the Meadows, she told him that planning permission has been applied for.

A letter had been sent out recently asking for land for possible Gypsy sites. The response seems to be good and MBC are confident that there is potential to find 15 pitches.

**Richard Thick** was not present

**10.2 Chairman**

Firstly Robert thanked Councillor Jenny Gibson for her services over the last 4 years and expressed his disappointment and that of the Parish Council at the lack of attendance and support by Richard Thick.

He reported that he had attended a Police Forum recently with most of the discussion being focussed on Speedwatch with one of the main criticisms being levelled at the lack of feedback. The problems with travellers in Headcorn and Staplehurst were also discussed. Robert had also commented on the increase in crime including the recent incidents on Liverton Hill, he was assured that the Police would show their presence to explain the various happenings in our area.

He discussed the increase in Council Tax pointing out that the Parish precept had risen by 9.6% out of a total of 35 Parishes 14 of them had made lower increases than us, but 21 had increased their precept above us i.e. Teston 95%, East Farleigh 49%, Headcorn 19%. Robert felt that we had been fair; we have the lowest Band D rate. Next year our Concurrent Grant is guaranteed to be £ 3170 but this certainly won't be the same the year after. Jenny Gibson pointed out that Headcorn have to fund their own street lighting and toilets.

There were a couple of things Robert had seen in the press, one of which was to do with the protection of the Greensand Ridge as it had never been classed as an area of outstanding beauty, now there is an appeal for this to be so.

He had also noted that although Boxley had not increased their Parish Precept they had total reserves of almost £360k.

Another article referred to Parish Councils being quite slow publishing information, we were approximately halfway down on the list which stated that the last time we had published minutes was Nov 2011; West Farleigh had not published any Minutes since May 2010. The newspaper did say that it was a legal requirement for Minutes to be published on the website, but this is not a fact. Robert reported on how well the Village Hall is doing, a Bowling Club is to be set up in the not too distant future.

At the KALC meeting which is due to be held tomorrow evening the issue of Concurrent Functions is on the Agenda. KALC are negotiating with MBC on how the system will operate on behalf of the Parishes – in particular, the small ones.

**11. FINANCE**

**11.1 To note Income received since last Meeting**

The Clerk advised that £81.01 had been received for refund of VAT from HM Customs & Excise on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2012 and a cheque for £2500 had been paid in to the bank today.

**11.2 To authorise any payments made since the last Meeting**

It was proposed by Cllr Turner and seconded by Cllr Galton 'that the Council approve the following payments made since the last Meeting'. This was Agreed.

	£
000363 Headcorn Parish Council (Speedwatch Equip)	180.00
000364 T.R. Supplies (visibility vests)	50.63
000365 Cancelled	
000366 Thurnham P.Council (JPG)	10.34
000367 Security Direct (verge posts)	112.84

**11.3 To resolve that any cheques presented can be signed**

It was proposed by Cllr Close and seconded by Cllr Wickens "that the Council approve the following payments". This was **Agreed** and the following cheques were signed:-

	£
000368 KALC (Training C.King)	72.00
000369 Cancelled	
000370 R Tew (Xmas Tree)	69.99
000371 R Smith	75.00
000372 St Nicholas Church	500.00
000373 Village Hall	300.00

**11.4 To note balance at Bank**

The Accounts Book and bank statement were circulated to the Members, it was **Noted** that the balance was £1435.43. Payments to the Clerks were still payable by the end of the month.

**11.5 Budgets**

The Clerk reported that the Budgets were pretty much on target, the calculations of tax on the clerks salaries still had to be done but she did not anticipate any National Insurance liability. It was **'Agreed'** that a deposit of around £500 would be paid to Kent Highways for the Interactive Sign

**11.6 Gardening Club**

Councillor Hitchins had reported to the Clerk that the Gardening Club does have a surplus but that they do make a loss on some meetings. He had explained to them about the cuts and they asked that they still be considered in the future. The Gardening Club should in future send in an invoice for costs pertaining to the work they do on planters and various tubs around the village.

**11.7 Surplus Funds History Society – RG**

The clerk reported that a cheque had been received from the History Society for £2500, being the surplus natural profit from book sales. It was **'Agreed'** that these funds would be used to pay the balance of the Interactive sign once it had been erected and the rest of the money would be put on deposit and held as a Reserve Fund.

**12. BOUGHTON MALHERBE HISTORY SOCIETY**

Ron Galton reported that things are coming along with another book, but it would take some time and there was nothing specific to report.

**13. FIRE AT BARN – Report from Chris Wheal**

The following report was received from Chris Wheal:-

It is of course Pat's last meeting and I record my sincere thanks and appreciation regarding our liaison on various 'happenings' in the village and most noticeably Lenham Road and the Fire. I understand only too well the work involved behind the scenes when dealing with both Borough and County Council which takes stamina, determination and not taking no for an answer – Pat has all the attributes and more and will be sorely missed.

**Firewatch**

The verge marker posts are now in situ and doing their intended jobs. All hydrants have been traced and to my knowledge operational, albeit further remedial works on several of them are programmed shortly.

An information sheet for all Parishioners is to go out with this month's Malherbe Monthly.

A review meeting is to take place with KFRS quite soon.

**14 GRAFTY GREEN WATER SUPPLY – Report Ron Galton**

Councillor Galton reported that he needs to reply to South East Water and is unable to use the argument of low water pressure, he had not received one reply to the article in the Malherbe Monthly asking for parishioners to carry out a test which would prove that there was low water pressure in the village which means that the pressure is within the legal limits. The main through the village is old and if pressure were to be increased there could be a lot of burst pipes. Ron said he would continue discussing this with S E Water; it was likely that the only solution to our problem would be a new water main.

**15 TO CONSIDER THAT D CHANTLER & M DAVIDSON SHOULD CONTINUE AS TRUSTEES OF THE HONYWOOD & DOUGLAS CHARITY**

Councillor Galton proposed that Mike Davidson and David Chantler should continue as Trustees of the Honywood and Douglas Charity, this was seconded by Councillor Close – this was **Agreed**.  
The Clerk was asked to inform the Clerk at Lenham of this decision. **ACTION PA**

## 16 ANY OTHER INFORMATION/ITEMS ARISING

**Other Items that had arisen since the last meeting – Pat Anderson****Blocked Gullies Church Road**

Since the last meeting the Chairman had informed the clerk that the gullies at the top of Church Road were blocked, she has since been advised that cleansing will go into the programme for the first quarter of the new financial year. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Missing Finger post Chain Gate**

The Clerk had also been advised that the sign to Grafty Green was missing at Chain Gate, PA had dealt with this and the sign is on order. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Meeting with Alastair Coleman**

The clerk reported that a couple of items that were not on the Agenda had been discussed as follows:-

**Headcorn Rd opposite Crumps Lane**

Luckily enough on the day we met the water was pouring out of the road so Alastair was able to see what happens himself, any other day and we would not have been so lucky. An order has been raised for pipe work and gullies to be jetted and cleansed to outfall, then the pipe work will be assessed to see if adequate for the flow, should be done within 3 months. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Ditch in front of Myrtle House**

A CCTV survey had shown the pipe work to be infested with roots. An assessment would be made to see if the roots could be cut or if the pipes needed replacing. This should be completed within 3 months but may take longer if new pipe work is required the road would have to be closed. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Ditches in Woodcock Lane**

A meeting would be arranged with Richard Barling from MBC in April to discuss these issues, not sure how long this would take to resolve. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Coldbridge Lane – Flooding**

Alastair had looked at this and discovered that one of the grips were blocked, he had partially cleared it but would have to be done properly and should be done within 3 months. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Gully Cleansing Schedule**

Some time ago PA had asked Kathryn Lewis the Manager of the Drainage team for a Gully Cleansing Schedule as we are all agreed, after advice from Mike Davidson, that if the gullies were cleansed regularly the problems on Liverton Hill might be reduced. She explained that she has regularly chased them, to date the correct information had not been received. **ACTION PA/CK**

**Localism Act**

MBC had sent a letter re a new common Code of Conduct across Kent. It also explains that a copy of the Parish Council's Register of Interests must be made available for inspection at a place within the District not only in the Parish Council area. It should also be published on the District Council's website as well as ours. A request was made for details of our Parish Councillors to be sent together with Start and End dates of term of office, what their key post is (i.e. Chairman) and email address although this would not be published. Home addresses were also requested if Councillor agreed, this had been discussed and most were not in agreement. The other details had been emailed.

**Land at Ivy Farm**

Ron was asked if there was anything further to report on the application for the land at Ivy Farm. He informed those present that the results of the new survey were awaited and if the application is given the go ahead it is his understanding that the applicants will have to apply to Natural England for a license, if this is granted they will still have to submit details to satisfy the Planning Committee's conditions, particularly with regard to light, pollution and glass. It is Ron's opinion that the applicant won't do that until they are absolutely sure that all necessary permissions have been given.

**Solar Park**

Ron reported on his visit to view the scheme for the Solar Park. There are a total of 24000 photovoltaic solar panels to generate electricity to feed into the National Grid. The system is completely safe as all exposed panels and cabling operate at 24 volts with conversion to high voltage in locked enclosures. It is a huge scheme but well screened and can only be seen from a few locations a long way off, mostly from footpaths. In his opinion there can be no valid objections sufficient enough to convince the planning committee to refuse permission, it is more than likely that it will be approved as it will help Maidstone to achieve their environmental target set by Government,

for example, it is quite possible that on a good sunny day the amount generated could supply all of Lenham, however, it should be noted that this will not be of direct benefit because the panels will feed into the grid and not into a dedicated Lenham supply.

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Robert Turner said a few words about Pat Anderson as this was her last Parish Council meeting before she retires from the post at the end of March. Pat has held the post of Parish Clerk for the past seven years, during this time she has brought a considerable number of new skills to the job. She has been relentless in her pursuit of KCC with a high standard of satisfaction. Pat has certainly improved the quality of life for the residents of Boughton Malherbe Parish for which we are all deeply grateful. The Chairman thanked Pat for all her hard work from which we have all benefited. The Chairman presented Pat with a gift from the Parish and Sylvia Close presented Pat with a bouquet of flowers. He then welcomed the new Parish Clerk Christine King, and wished her well in her new role.

The Chairman made one final point that this would be the last meeting before the Elections, he thanked all the Councillors for everything they had done over the last 4 years, but added that whoever is elected would need to ensure that things are done differently in future and that with the ever increasing demand on Parish Councillors to go to different meetings each Councillor needs to do his bit and that it shouldn't fall on the shoulders of just a few.

**17 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**There being no further matters to discuss, the meeting closed at 10.00pm**

Signed..... Dated .....