

A Meeting of the Parish Council was held at The Memorial Hall, The Street, Frittenden on Tuesday 11th February 2025 at 7.30pm.

Present were: Cllr G Lawrence
Cllr A Staples
Cllr J Tuke
Cllr L Gosbee

In attendance: Mrs E Nightingale (Clerk), Cllr A Fairweather (Borough) & Cllr N Warne (Borough)

PUBLIC FORUM:

None.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr R Vernon, Cllr S Murray, Cllr M Viviers & Cllr S Holden (County)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct Part 2)

Cllr Tuke declared an interest in planning application 25/00101/FULL to be considered under agenda item 17

3. BOROUGH COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Cllr Fairweather spoke about the upcoming plans to merge Kent County Council and the various Borough Councils in Kent into a Unitary Council under the Government's policies for devolution. The proposal is that Kent be governed by an elected Mayor and split into 3 authorities, which will probably mirror the NHS/Police areas of Medway, East and West Kent.

Kent had applied to be one of the first areas to be reorganised under an accelerated scheme but it had not been chosen as one of the 6 areas that will move forward on that scheme. That does not mean that the above changes will not happen, just that the timetable will be a little longer. The changes will be made in 2027, when elections will take place for the new unitary authority or authorities. The existing Borough Councils will continue to operate alongside the new authorities for one year, until May 2028.

The above changes will not affect Parish Councils.

It is not yet known what the impact of this will be but Cllr Warne commented that there are likely to be fewer members of the unitary authority for each geographical area.

Cllr Fairweather noted that TWBC had set up a cross-party working group to look at what these changes mean and how they could be managed. One of the questions Cllr Fairweather had was around what would happen to KCC's debt, which currently stands at c.£1bn. The Government is not prepared to wipe the slate clean and so does this mean that the new unitary authority will be expected to take that debt on?

Cllr Warne raised the campaign for a new non-selective secondary school in the Weald. A survey has been issued to establish the number of prospective pupils such a school might attract and she stressed the need to get as much engagement with that survey as possible. Cllr Lawrence will check with the secretary of Frittenden School and the Pre-School to ensure that details of the survey have been circulated to their parents. He will also contact Clare Deaves who runs the Church's Little Lambs toddler group.

4. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 7TH JANUARY 2025

This item was postponed to the next meeting of the Council.

5. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

None

6. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS – INVITATIONS TO TENDER

The Council agreed that the current Grounds Maintenance Contract should not be invited to tender for the 2025/26 contracts due to their poor performance. The Clerk noted that, in principle, the Council should attempt to obtain at least three quotations, but it was proving difficult to find sufficient contractors to whom invitations to tender could be sent. Invitations would be submitted to Kent Grasslands Services Ltd and Groundscare & General Services Ltd. In previous years, Capel Groundcare had also been invited to tender but they declined that invitation last year and the Clerk understood that this was because the business was closing. Cllr Lawrence will ask his fellow chairmen whether they know of another contractor who could be invited to tender.

7. PLANNED CLOSURE OF CRANBROOK ROAD

Cllr Lawrence had liaised closely with KCC and Canham Homes to see whether the impact of the planned road closure could be lessened. Regrettably, all alternative options have proven impractical due to the nature and extent of the works to be carried out. Cllr Lawrence has therefore requested that appropriate signage be put up at both ends of Dig Dog Lane / Bettenham Lane and at the Biddenden Road end of Sand Lane to try and discourage drivers from using those lanes as diversionary routes. Cllr Lawrence will continue to monitor the situation and liaise closely with the contractor carrying out the works to ensure that the road is reopened as soon as it is safe to do so.

A resident had suggested that temporary parking restrictions be put in place on Biddenden Road to ensure that there was an area free of parked cars where traffic could pull in to let other cars pass. Cllr Lawrence will see whether this could be achieved by the placing a cone or cones in an appropriate spot.

8. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN & WORKING GROUP

Cllr Lawrence will put a notice in the next edition of the Parish Magazine calling for volunteers to join the working group.

9. UNLOCKING AED CABINETS

It was noted that current guidance suggested that defibrillator cabinets should be unlocked or that the relevant combination lock code be printed on the cabinet for ease of access, but the Council was concerned that this would risk the devices being stolen. Cllr Lawrence will discuss the

guidance with the resident responsible for the AED units and report back at the next meeting of the Council.

10. WEST KENT RURAL GRANTS SCHEME

It was noted that a total of £13,500 had been set aside for this scheme. Any grant applied for would have to be matched by the Council and it was felt that there wasn't a project to which such funding could be applied at this time.

11. SPRING VILLAGE CLEAN UP

This event will take place on 5th April 2025 and will be advertised in the Parish Magazine.

12. ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Cllr Lawrence sought the Council's opinion on who should be invited to speak at this year's APA.

13. 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF VE DAY

Cllr Lawrence will liaise with the Historical Society to establish what they had planned. The church bells will be rung and it was thought that this could be arranged to coincide with the lighting of the Village Beacon.

14. SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Staples noted that a new tripod bag had been purchased, as well as two new high visibility jackets. 9 sessions had been planned but 3 were cancelled due to the poor weather. 20 out of 220 vehicles had been recorded speeding which, at 9%, was slightly below the usual level. The highest speed recorded was 46 mph.

Cllr Staples was pleased to report that the Speedwatch Group had been augmented by some new volunteers.

15. PLAYGROUND INSPECTIONS / EQUIPMENT

Cllr Gosbee confirmed that, other than the playground being very wet, there were no maintenance issues to report.

16. ROAD REPORT

Cllr Gosbee reported that some of the potholes on London Lane had been repaired. Potholes had also been marked on Biddenden Road but he did not yet have any information as to when they might be repaired.

The new village gateway on Biddenden Road was in place but the 30mph roundel had not yet been painted on the road and the Frittenden sign was yet to be erected. The Clerk confirmed that those items were included in the design and she would therefore raise this with KCC if they did not return to complete those works.

Cllr Gosbee noted that there had been a lot of fly tipping since the last meeting, but all but one lot of waste had been cleared.

Cllr Gosbee noted that the top of the storage container on the Parish Field used to store grit had come off, possibly in the recent high winds. Cllr Lawrence will take a look at this and see if it can be repaired.

17. PLANNING

New Applications

25/00101/FULL	<p>1 Sunnyside Cottages, Biddenden Road, Frittenden Two storey side extension, second floor extension & three dormer windows; single storey lean-to extension & landscape alterations</p> <p>Proposed by Cllr Staples, seconded by Cllr Gosbee RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL (1 Abstention)</p>
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Outcome of Previous applications

24/03003/FULL	<p>Great Bubhurst Farm, Bubhurst Lane, Frittenden Single storey side extension to existing garage & conversion of roof space & addition of two dormers</p> <p>PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
24/02913/FULL	<p>Land to South of Thrift Park, Knoxbridge, Frittenden Retrospective – Dropped kerb</p> <p>PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
24/03133/FULL	<p>Willow Cottage, Ayleswade Lane, Single storey extensions to front side & rear of existing bungalow. Erection of new standalone garage / car port.</p> <p>PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
24/02974/FULL	<p>Broadlake, Mill Lane, Frittenden Minor Material Amendment to Planning Permission 24/00181/FILL – (carport – larch cladding to be vertical rather than horizontal; Insertion of a mezzanine floor in both bays; Change the colour of the roof tiles to red; Addition of one Velux window on the rear elevation)</p> <p>PERMISSION GRANTED</p>
25/02935/FULL	<p>Oaklands, Cranbrook Road, Frittenden Variation of Conditions 2 & 9 of Planning Permission 23/02253/FULL – proposed single storey rear extension to the barn with a mono pitch roof</p> <p>PERMISSION GRANTED</p>

Planning appeals

- None

18. GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

- None.

19. FINANCE

- It was proposed by Cllr Tuke, seconded by Cllr Staples, and **RESOLVED** by all members present to pay the accounts/ as follows:

FRITTENDEN PAYMENTS – FEBRUARY 2025					
Cheque Number	GROSS	VAT	NET	SUPPLIER	DETAILS
BACS	£17.00	Nil	£17.00	Frittenden Memorial Hall	Hall Hire (1 x session + winter surcharge)
BACS	£7.46	Nil	£7.46	Sandhurst PC	50% of cost of Speedwatch tripod bag
BACS	£66.69	£10.00	£56.69	CSW Online Shop	2 x Speedwatch jackets
BACS	£75.58	Nil	£75.58	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Expenses - February
BACS	£194.87	Nil	£194.87	Mrs E Nightingale	Clerk's Salary – February
BACS	£48.60	Nil	£48.60	HMRC	PAYE
BACS	£469.06	£78.18	£390.88	Landscape Services	Grounds Maintenance – January & February
DD	£11.99	£2.00	£9.99	Hugo Fox	Website Hosting fee
DD	£98.02	£4.67	£93.35	Npower	Streetlighting Energy – January
Total	£989.27	£94.85	£894.42		

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cllr Staples noted that the Kent Ramblers Association required applications for new footpath maps to be made via Parish Councils. The Clerk will contact them in that regard.

Cllr Staples also suggested that those moving into the new Canham Homes development be provided with a welcome pack.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed at 8:50pm.

Chairman's Signature: _____

Date: _____