

**THE PARISH COUNCIL OF ST MARGARETS-AT-CLIFFE**

Minutes of the Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the above Parish Council held on Monday 12th December 2022 at 7pm at St Margaret's Hall.

**Present :** Cllrs Rebecca Simcox (in the chair), A Newton, A Fielding, P Blake, J Harris, G Simcox, T Gilham together with new Cllr Clive Taylor. (Clerk attended via video link). District Cllr Martin Bates also in attendance. Apologies received from County Cllr Steve Manion and District Cllr Oliver Richardson.

**Public Participation:-**

Mr Peter Wells commented that the gritting by Kent Highways over the weekend of very bad weather had been severely lacking.

1. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 14th November 2022, having been circulated to all Councillors, were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.	
2. Cllrs Fielding and Blake both declared a personal interest in the agenda item for the White Cliffs Hotel under Planning.	
3. <b><u>Co-option of new Councillor</u></b>  Mr Clive Taylor was proposed and accepted as a new Parish Councillor. He duly signed the Acceptance of Office form. Cllr G Simcox will arrange for a PC Chromebook to be provided and for Clive to be given a new email address for the Parish Council.	Cllr G Simcox to deal
4. <b><u>County and District Councillor Report</u></b>  - Report received from District Cllr Martin Bates (attached to minutes).  - Cllr Taylor asked if some sort of memoria could be placed at the proposed new redevelopment site to commemorate those who died in The Crypt fire in 1970 - Cllr Bates will take this forward.  - Cllr Gilham made the point that millions were being spent on the new Fast Bus Transit link from Whitfield/Guston to the town whilst local bus services are cut. Cllr Bates explained that most of this funding had come from Central Government funds. He advised that Stagecoach rep had attended the recent Joint Transport Board meeting - bus services had been run for a number of years with subsidies from KCC - their Government funding had been cut and savings needed to be made.  - Cllr R Simcox stated that she will be attending the Planning Committee meeting on Thursday 15th December - the PC still believes that due process has not been carried out with regard to Policy DM24 and marketing of the business.	
5. <b><u>Clerk Report</u></b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Have written to MP Natalie Elphicke re reduction to bus service - no detailed reply yet.</li><li>● Dover Security Services invoices now in order - two since paid.</li><li>● £50 paid re gifts for Valley volunteers (biscuits).</li></ul>	

- Quote re Valley clearing - £1,300 from C & W Groundcare (Rhino £810). IT WAS RESOLVED to accept the quotation from Rhino Plant.
- Local Plan - responded - difficult and had to complete re SM010 as being "not sound".
- £700 grant paid to History Society.
- £115.20 extra funding confirmed to Emma Rosen re phone box.
- Pensions regulator - too early to complete re-enrolment on line - they will write again.
- ER41 footpath (as I advised) runs across Parish Council Land (Old Bottom Freedown). Someone will need to check if report is correct that path is blocked and we will need to unblock as the land owner.
- Nothing further heard from Martin Hunt re tree / hedge planting at car park / Church wall.
- Reply from Keith Watson re poles in Bay - will arrange for rusted pole to be replaced and investigated secure sign panel.
- Repairs completed to car park exit (resident requested).
- Small lottery licence renewed at £20.
- Dangerous tree reported by Melanie Wrigley removed at £385 - under Finance.
- Contacted by Vivienne Pay re Madge field - wants to investigate different mowing regime.
- Request made re booking Hall next year on 25th November - response awaited.
- Christmas tree recycling 6th Jan at village car park.
- Latest two invoices received from Idverde - returned unpaid!
- Litter bins - Cllr Blake dealing.
- Phone call from resident in The Freedown - referred to Community Warden/CSU.
- Bus shelter at Nelson Park smells of cannabis.
- Land adjacent to Jessamine Cottage - still to be taken forward.

Clerk to deal

Cllrs to check

Clerk and Chair to liaise

**6. Planning**

The following comments were made on the applications considered:-

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|----------|--|
| 22/01466 | Erection of a detached dwelling (part retrospective) -<br>Sunnymeade, Nelson Park Road<br><br><i>The Parish Council objects to this apparently illegal building - incongruous in both the street scene and within the AONB</i>   |
| 22/01471 | Erection of extension to golf shop -<br>Walmer And Kingsdown Golf Club, The Leas, Kingsdown<br><br><i>No objections</i>  |
| 22/01472 | Erection of an orangery to southwest elevation, dormer window to rear roof slope, first floor render replaced with hanging clay tiles, replacement roof and all windows (existing 2no. conservatories and rear roof light to be demolished) -<br>Ivy Bank, 33 Granville Road<br><br><i>No objections</i> |
| 22/01479 | Construction of a compacted hardcore hardstanding to serve barn<br>Land Rear Of 7 Millfield<br><br><i>No objections</i>  |
| 22/01458 | Insertion of a replacement French door -<br>The Granville, Flat 9B, Hotel Road<br><br><i>No objections</i>   |

(b) White Cliffs Hotel - the application is to be heard at Planning Committee on Thursday 15th November - Chair to attend and speak. IT WAS RESOLVED to agree to ask solicitor Hannah Brown to provide a written letter opposing the lack of marketing of the business as required by Policy DM24 - cost £240.

(c) Glebe Field - a further extension has been granted to applicant to provide further details.

(d) Housing Needs Survey - unfortunately Action with Communities in Rural Kent is due to close owing to lack of funding. Clerk asked to contact District Councillors to see if DDC could assist in looking at a Housing Needs Survey specific to St Margaret's.

Clerk to deal

**7. Finance and Accounts**

(a) The following payments were approved:-

Mrs R Simcox - refund L/R fees	£18.00
Mr I Miller - Registrar fees	£155.00
St Margarets History Society - grant	£700.00
B Young Grounds Maintenance - Alexander Field	£204.00
Mr G Simcox - raffle tickets	£68.00
Dover Security Services - Valley	£172.80
Dover Security Services - Valley	£302.40
Mrs A Newton - expenses re Footpath Walk	£17.42
Imperative Training Ltd - 2 new defibrillators	£3,595.20
Castle Water	£49.36
Credit card - litter equipment/postage stamps	£54.44
D E Hart re Valley volunteers	£50.00
Castle Water	£19.54
Google Cloud - monthly fee	£46.00
NEST - Clerk/Council pension	£232.94
D A Tree Surgeons	£385.00
R Purchase - November invoice	£1,468.80
Mr I Miller - labour Aug-Nov + Registrar fees	£1,040.00
Mrs R Simcox - stationery	£15.85
Jane Cook - Nov salary	£1,373.73
Jane Cook	£20.00
HM Revenue and Customs	£298.72

Receipts - £3,000 C Schofield re 2 x defibrillators; £170 Burial fees.	£10,287.20
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(b) Councillors provided with a summary of the current position of finances; agreed that a discussion to be had in early January to discuss Precept for 2023-2024.

Clerk/Chair to arrange

(c) Grasscutting - no new quote yet received - to remain on agenda for next month.

Clerk to deal

8. **Request for new bench**

- Cllr Blake had been in discussion with Paul Brown who would like to site a bench in the Valley, near to current Alan Simpson bench. Recent vandalism has been seen at the Simpson bench and Mr Brown would like to fix his own bench, using secure feet at the bottom. Parish Council agreed in principle with further details to follow.
- Cllr Blake will make contact with Owen Ashton who had also requested a memorial bench.

Cllr Blake to deal

9. **Correspondence**

Per list provided to Councillors.

Resident re hazardous tree stump in SF Valley.

- Community Warden re flood warden training.
- KALC Area Committee meeting minutes of 26 Oct.
- Mrs H Knight re reduction to bus services (Clerk had responded).
- Matthew Arnold Stagecoach re bus timetables.
- Anthony at TG Designs - thank you re time allowed at previous meeting.
- Follow up bench request from Mr Ashton.
- V McKecknie re overgrown hedge.
- Steve Manion re Community Transport grant.
- Rebecca Brough re Town and Parish meeting event.
- DDC re local Housing Needs Survey.
- Dave Austin tree surgeon re dangerous tree (removed).
- Ms H Watson re complaint (+ two further emails).
- Notification re two planning applications for White Cliffs Hotel at Planning Committee.
- Steve Manion re food vouchers for children on free school meals.

10. **Reports from Councillors**

- Cllr Newton reported re Valley (Mel Wrigley's report attached to minutes). Fireworks had been seen recently and reports received re the cattle being slightly "feisty". Cllr Gilham will arrange to clear cattle grids when he is able.
- Cllr R Simcox confirmed that the Christmas light-up event had proved hugely successful with over 300 people attending - it was agreed that more people to help would be needed next year if this is to be repeated. Shop owner VJ did brilliantly with providing food and the Village Hall provided facilities. All proceeds from the raffle are to go to charity. It was agreed that consideration of the event needs to be considered much earlier in the year, perhaps as early as August.
- Re King's Coronation next year - PC to consider in New Year.
- Cllr R Simcox advised that Carol Schofield had been raising funding and had graciously provided £3,000 for the purchase of two new village defibrillators following the sad death of a local resident from a heart attack aged 41. It was agreed that these be sited at the Smugglers pub and the Coastguard pub with electricians hopefully to complete the installation soon - PC to meet cost. Shepherd Neame had today provided a complicated contract which they require the PC to enter into before installation at the Coastguard which Clerk to check over. Also Clerk to check on insurance cover under current policy.

Clerk to note

Clerk to place on agenda

Clerk to deal

- Cllr R Simcox had asked Clive Hardy to undertake further training events for use of the defibrillators - further details in due course.
- Cllr Gilham re proposed new war memorial - he has been provided with Kent Highways contact and will be in liaison re possible installation behind car layby in High Street.
- Cllr Fielding and Cllr R Simcox re proposals via Highway Improvement Plan for double yellow lines. Proposed sites had been placed on Parish Council website, with a further request received today re Kingsdown Road. Cllr R Simcox confirmed that they had a planned meeting with Kent Highways on 20th January. Sites currently on website are:-
  - Kingsdown Road
  - Sea Street – extending the current double yellows which allow cars to pass
  - Bay Hill junction – around First Light
  - Reach Road South of Royston Gardens
  - Sea Street opposite Portal House.

Cllr Gilham to take forward

11. **Village Maintenance and Matters affecting the Parish**

- Cllr Blake had completed the monthly Playing Field Inspection - issues following previous inspection continue to be dealt with by contractor R Purchase; dog poo at Alexander Field had been reported to DDC. He is dealing with DDC re the litter bins at King George V Playing Field as one had been mistakenly been taken away - to be returned. Further bin at Alexander Field has been installed. The tennis courts continue to be cleaned but if this fails, professional cleaning may be required. Confirmed that one bench had been repaired. Some branches at corner of King George V Field to be cleared away.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.25 pm.

Confirmed:

Chair

12th December 2022

## **MEETING REPORT FOR ST MARGARET'S AT CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL ON MONDAY 12.12.22**

### **DOVER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW REGULATION 19 SUBMISSION**

The Dover District Council Regulation 19 Submission version of its Local Plan is now open for consultation. This consultation opened on 21 st October 2022 and closed for receipt of comments at 5pm on the 9 th December 2022.

### **RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND**

DDC has received a grant of £400k. This is meant for the rural communities and is aimed at Business Development, Farm Business Diversification & Community Infrastructure. DCC Tourism & Infrastructure team will be contacting Parish Councils imminently.

### **FREE STREET DANCE SESSIONS IN DOVER AND DEAL**

Girls aged eight and over in the district have been enjoying free street dance sessions organised by DDC. The project is funded by the charity, StreetGames, which aims to change lives and transform communities through the power of sport. The lessons have proved to be really successful in Dover and are now taking place in Deal. With teaching that includes learning various street dance moves and exercises that will strengthen joints and improve their flexibility, the participants are learning a street dance routine as part of a group too.

Deal sessions (until 4 January)

Wednesday evenings, 4.30pm-5.30pm, at Golf Road Centre, Deal

Thursday evenings, 4pm-5pm, at St Richards Church Centre, Deal

### **Supporting Communities - DDC Gives More Than £230k in Community Grant**

Community groups in the district have been given a winter boost of over £110k in the latest round of Dover District Council's Community Grants scheme – meaning the scheme has allocated more than £230k to over 130 groups in the area this year. This week, the Appraisal Panel allocated over £110k to 66 groups in the winter round of the popular grants' initiative. Earlier this year, DDC announced payments of over £120k to 70 groups in the summer round.

### **Applications open for Community Transport Grant**

Charities, resident groups and parish or town councils are now able to apply for funding from Kent County Council's (KCC) Community Transport Grant. This year £450,000 is available to go towards local schemes which provide invaluable services to residents who have difficulty accessing public transport. The council has provided grants for community transport schemes for a number of years but this year has made additional funding available for groups to bid for to try to help communities impacted by changes to their bus service.

Applications are now open and should be submitted before the deadline on 15 th January 2023 but we have asked KCC for an extension to this deadline. Visit <https://www.kent.gov.uk/communitytransportgrant> to find out more about the Community Transport Grant scheme and how to apply.

### **Christmas in Dover District**

We've confirmed our seasonal waste collections, with no collections on Monday 26 December and collections that week moved forward a day, (Monday moved to Tuesday, etc). Please see our website for the latest on Council services over Christmas/New Year. And to help people to shop local, we've also introduced free parking in DDC-owned car parks on Saturdays throughout December. There is a whole range of seasonal events in the district. Highlights from partners have already included Christmas light switch-ons. The festive fun continued in Dover's Market Square on Saturday, 10 December, with a market, live music, and a visit from Santa! We've also unveiled this year's Christmas tree on Deal Pier.

More on Christmas arrangements

DDC Completes Land Assembly for Bench Street Redevelopment Dover District Council (DDC) has acquired the freehold of properties at 8, 10, 11 and 14 Bench Street in Dover, completing a programme of land assembly that brings the regeneration of the area a step closer. DDC already owns 15 Bench Street and the Bench Street car park. Acquiring the properties is an

important step in the council's bid to secure around £20m from the Government's Levelling-Up Fund for the 'Dover Beacon' project which will see the comprehensive redevelopment of the area. The proposals for Bench Street include:

2,000m<sup>2</sup> educational campus for the creative and digital industries

690m<sup>2</sup> facilities for small/medium businesses

800m<sup>2</sup> green space next to the River Dour

Improving sustainable transport with additional electric bicycle hubs, as an expansion of the current Dover cycle hire scheme

October/November 2022

White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP)

A Summary of Works

South Foreland Valley

07/10/22 – Volunteer task

Continuing from our last Volunteer task in the lower central compartment, the team proceeded with the cutting of small poplar saplings with the mower, cutting areas of scrub with the use of brushcutters and hand tools. We also focused on the removal of invasive species, such as Sycamore, Himalayan honeysuckle, and cotoneaster. With the strength of 8 volunteers assisting on this task, we were able to remove a large amount of scrub and expose areas of former chalk grassland.

Lighthouse Road Field 12 Dexter cows were moved onto the compartment in early November to start their conservation grazing across the site.

Central Field, the majority of our work this Autumn has been concentrated on working in this compartment, undertaking habitat restoration work to manage areas scrub and invasives that are establishing in areas of valuable chalk grassland habitat.

Volunteers clearing areas of scrub Dave cutting the areas of white poplar

Habitat restoration work taking place in the central compartment, exposing areas of valuable chalk grassland.

27/10/22 – SAGA group and volunteer task

Later in the month we were joined by a group from SAGA who wanted to use their corporate volunteer day of the year, by undertaking a conservation management task with WCCP. We were also joined by 8 of our regular volunteers which meant we were able to achieve a high amount of management for the day. During the task we split into three groups, one party using hand tools, such as loppers and bow saws to cut back invasives like the Himalayan honeysuckle and sycamores, while the two other teams cleared areas of scrub and raked up cut vegetation to be loaded into the trailer. The task was a real success, managing to clear a great amount of scrub and the team was very satisfied to see the results of all their hard work at the end of the day.

Volunteers and the SAGA group removing small trees and scrub White poplar and grass being raked up and removed by the team

Cattle grazing in the valley

07/11/22 – Assisting the grazier, we moved 9 Dexter cows onto Lighthouse field to start their winter conservation grazing.

20/11/22 – 3 more Dexter's were moved onto lighthouse to join the 9.

Replicating the grazing cycle this year, we intend to keep on until late winter and take them off in early spring, this is so the valley can bloom from spring and throughout the summer months.

Cattle Grazing

There have been three complaints about the cattle being rather curious and coming right up to people and dogs. The cattle had only been put out to graze in the valley recently. Melanie went to investigate by taking her dog and seeing how the cattle behaved. The cattle were mainly lying on the ground enjoying the sunshine. She went up to within 3 metres of the cattle with her dog on a lead, and the nearest steer grunted twice but that was all. It did not come towards them, and Melanie walked away. He did not follow them.

It has been discovered that a group of teenagers had been provoking the cattle (which is very sad because they are young cattle (still babies) some of them are not much taller than a big dog!). And it was also discovered that fireworks had been let off in the valley which would have spooked the cattle and possibly made them more anxious. So this would explain the cattle behaviour. We will monitor how the cattle behave. There is plenty of space in the valley so people and dogs do not necessarily need to pass close to the cattle. The cattle are only in one of the three fields. And there are Cattle Grazing signs up



on the kissing gates of the field where the cattle are grazing to inform visitors. It is essential to graze the chalk grassland to maintain the biodiversity and to keep the area in favourable condition.

24/11/22 – Volunteer task

Work continued in the central compartment, scrub clearing and removal of invasives. Due to bad weather the volunteer task was initially called off, but 2 volunteers decided to come and help with some management late morning. Today we focused on working along the long chalk bank close to the bottom of central field, this has been a very important area for the Adonis blue butterfly in the past, and still holds a considerable amount of its food plant, Horseshoe vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*).

Recent wildlife sightings:

2 Pallas's warbler were spotted by local birders in November as well as a Yellow-browed warbler birds that have migrated from Siberia. Several Firecrest have also been present since October.

Before and after photos of the chalk grassland bank. Hopefully the area will produce many wildflowers in the coming spring/summer and attract important pollinators.

A selection of wildflower species were still in bloom at the end of November in the valley:

Greater Knapweed, common rock-rose, common century, yellow-wort, field scabious and harebell

31/10 and 1/11/2022. Cattle Grid Survey. A survey of all 12 cattle grids in the valley was done to check if they required maintenance to make them cattle proof. 4 were found to be in need of having debris cleared out to prevent cattle escaping from the fields.

A spreadsheet chart has been made with a description of the location of each cattle grid; its OS GPS grid reference and its ///What3Words address so it will be easier for other people to locate. The cattle grids each had a white number painted on the post. Some of these numbers have faded so we will we repaint them.

Currently, the dexter cattle are in the Lighthouse Road Field where all the cattle grids are in good order. However, the other two fields will require cattle grids to be cleaned before the cattle could be moved into them.

Report by Jason Moule and Melanie Wrigley, WCCP.

6/12/2022