

THE PARISH COUNCIL OF ST MARGARETS-AT-CLIFFE

Minutes of the Ordinary Monthly Meeting of the above Parish Council held on Monday 12th June 2023 at 7pm at St Margaret's Hall.

Present: Cllrs Rebecca Simcox (in the chair), P Blake, A Fielding, O Checksfield, together with Clerk. District Councillors Martin Bates and Oliver Richardson also in attendance. County Cllr Steve Manion in attendance.

Public participation:-

Viv Verren - asked if consideration could be given to placing notices near cliffs (at kissing gate perhaps) to provide details/phone number of Samaritans - she is aware that many of the Coastguard call-outs are for people with mental health issues. Cllr Simcox will liaise with NT in this respect.

Penny Bailey - noted that near litter bins in the Bay, litter bags are not provided, despite being noted on adjacent site as available. She will provide photograph.

Leigh Parnell - despite being unable to commit to being a Councillor, she would like to help with community issues, and has taken on the question of heavy bus cuts in the village.

- She will liaise with Maria Fitzgerald in this respect.
- WI to provide update after meeting tomorrow.
- She will make contact with various stakeholders to request further conversation.
- Will pursue the proposal from PC re a dog-leg of buses into the village from A258 (Clerk confirmed nothing received from Stagecoach in this respect).
- Will look at any recruitment being undertaken by Stagecoach as this would demonstrate availability of funds.
- Will continue liaison with local MP Natalie Elphicke.
- Cllr Simcox asked if further information could be gained re school buses from September.
- Suggestion of local petition to be considered.

George Simcox - stated that he believes the imposition of a 20mph speed limit through the High Street would not be best use of public funds and would have little effect, with signs ignored and not being enforced.

1. The minutes of the Parish Council meeting of 15th May 2023, having been circulated to all Councillors, were confirmed as a correct record of the meeting.	
2. None declared on agenda items.	
3. <u>County and District Councillor Report</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Written report received from District Councillors - attached to minutes.● Re request for repairs to Reach Road car park exit onto Reach Road - Clerk will look at previous correspondence to check if it was done by DDC last time.● Re Local Plan - It was agreed that PC should write to PINS re the proposal from DDC that STM010 land between Salisbury Road and The Drove way is the preferred site for any development.	Clerk to check Clerk to liaise with Cllr Fielding

- Cllr Simcox asked re the possibility of getting parking enforcement for the village - parking attendants collecting cash from Bay car park could issue tickets to offending motorists en route to the Bay each morning.

4. **Anita Sedgewick, DDC Place Projects and Development Officer**

Anita talked briefly about the cultural strategy, and sought views from Councillors and the public in attendance as to what they think Dover's cultural strengths and weaknesses are/how to build on the strengths/what would encourage people to go into Dover more frequently if they don't already.

A number of important regeneration projects are either underway or have been recently completed in Dover, including the Maison Dieu and redevelopment at Bench Street.

In order to develop the role of culture and art in relation to this work, DDC are currently at the formative stages of writing a new cultural strategy for Dover. This strategy will be developed in partnership with Charles Holland Architects, an architecture, design and art practice based in the town. This strategy will build on the last [cultural framework](#), which was published in 2009.

The focus is on Dover Town, and views were expressed re the paucity of good shops in the town, a general feeling of being run down, with a lack of general facilities - this despite a strong history of the area and good surrounding countryside. Comments made that in general people avoid going into Dover, with many preferring to travel to Deal, Sandwich or Canterbury. There is also a feeling that there can at times be an intimidating feeling in the town with groups hanging around on the streets.

5. **Clerk Report**

- Yew tree at Post Office Corner now trimmed to everyone's satisfaction and invoice paid.
- Still no response from Kent Highways re bus stop (have chased and provided Transport statement from original planning application).
- Re White Cliffs car park - planning enforcement visit undertaken but no problems seen with the site or pond.
- Have chased again re play inspection (should take place in August).
- Nikki Fulford, prospective new Councillor - booked and paid for course via KALC. Clerk to investigate courses for further prospective Councillor.
- Re Japanese knotweed in Valley - WCCP and volunteers aware of its location and treat annually (just about to repeat process).

Clerk to monitor

Clerk to monitor
re date

Clerk to deal

- First invoice paid re toilets - breakdown: cleaning £7,657; electric £132.64; water and sewerage £240.54; insurance £31.55 - total £8,061.73
- Vote of thanks to Tracy Evans for cutting back footpaths of weed overgrowth.
- “Staying Alive” phone app not linked to BHF The Circuit website for defibs - Clerk had added two new defibs to their site.
- Contacted re Public Space Protection Order for the memorial monument site - Cllr Simcox taking forward.
- Letter sent to Jo Parness’ family.
- DDC Planning confirmed two apps for White Cliffs Hotel being treated as “new” - response sent with no objections but believed to be retrospective.
- SMBCA character appraisal updated on our website.
- Re wayleave payment - has to remain as a cheque from UK Power Networks.
- Re Reach Road car park exit - reported to DDC.
- Notes from meeting re Neighbourhood Policing Review:-
 - Provided by slide presentation given of meeting.
 - Wards should have a “Beat Officer” who will be fully warranted with arrest and stop and search powers, as a single point of contact.
 - Officer will be named, locally accountable and have a visible presence.
 - 2020 - 33 total CSU staff, currently 18.
 - New model will see 7 from 7 June, new model from September will involve recruitment/training/etc.
 - Encouraged all residents to sign up to “Community Voice” app. Website www.communityvoicekent.co.uk
 - Of total of Dover area crime, St Margarets accounts for 4% (for the Ward).
- Invoice for WCCP re South Foreland Valley received at £5,000 which Clerk will deal with.
- Letter had been left at the Hall (missing) for Clerk re tree at corner of KGV field which is encroaching onto Ash Grove property. Cllr Blake will speak to maintenance contractor.

Cllr Simcox to meet

Clerk to deal

Cllr Blake to deal

6. **Planning**

(a) The following comments were made on the applications considered:-

23/00648 Erection of single storey rear extension, raised patio and alterations to side elevation
Sea Mist, 30 Lighthouse Road *No objections*

23/00642 Erection of single storey side extension, car port and entrance gate
Westcliffe Farmhouse, Dover Road, Westcliffe *No objections*

23/00659 Installation of 2 rooflights
Moonrakers, Chapel Lane *No objections*

23/00685 Erection of first floor rear extension
The Retreat, 34 Kingsdown Road *Concerns of neighbours to be borne in mind*

23/00220 Change of use of land and retention of existing outbuildings
(part retrospective)and proposed erection of building for recreational use
Land South East Of Collingwood House, Boyne Road *Support*

23/00683 Replacement of window with door
The Granville, Flat 10B, Hotel Road *No objections*

(b) Acknowledgement received from D Hannent, agent for the Bay Trust, advising he will place the letter from the PC before the Trustees - Cllr Simcox advised this is the first step in attempting to re-establish links with the Trust.

7. Cllrs R Simcox and A Fielding re Highway Improvement Plan

- Indication of estimated costs received from Kent Highways re proposals for 3 areas of double yellow lines and imposition of 20mph limit.
- IT WAS RESOLVED that the Parish Council would take forward the proposals for 3 areas of further yellow lines, in Sea Street and The Drove way but further clarity to be sought re the 20mph limit and costs involved.
- Work has begun on marking out the bus “box” at top of Sea Street.

Cllrs Simcox and Fielding will take forward

8. Finance

(a) The following payments made since May meeting were approve

KALC - Dynamic Councillor course	£60.00	(29)
Zurich Municipal - annual insurance	£2,706.37	(30)
Dover District Council - Reach Road toilets	£2,015.44	(31)
Credit card - defib pads/LR fees/ink	£97.03	(32)
Castle Water	£69.83	(33)
Dover Security Services - SF Valley	£712.80	(34)
DA Tree Surgeons	£345.00	(35)
Castle Water	£11.21	(36)
R Purchase - May invoice	£2,139.60	(37)
I Miller - Registrar fees	£140.00	(38)
NEST Pension - Clerk+PC	£256.32	(39)
Google Cloud - monthly fee	£46.00	(40)
Jane Cook - May salary	£1,477.94	(41)

Jane Cook - phone/internet
 H M Revenue & Customs
 Lynne Hopwood - cleaning

£20.00	(42)
£465.85	(43)
£315.81	(44)

£10.879.20	

Receipts:-

Cemetery fees	£880.00
Grazing fee	£1,100.00

IT WAS RESOLVED to agree for professional valuation of Glebe Field by Mr R Wilkie at £450 (+£150 per hour for any follow up work).

9. Co-option of new Councillors

It was agreed that an article prepared by Cllr Checksfield be placed in Parish magazine to seek new candidates for co-option to the Council. Clerk will place in the noticeboards.

Clerk and Cllr Checksfield to deal

10. Correspondence

- Planning Enforcement re building works in White Cliffs Hotel car park.
- Heather Waller PROW re gate designs for public rights of way.
- DDC Waste response re provision of “ashtrays” on litter bins.
- Paul Tuthill re broken bench outside Steps Cottage.
- Applause Rural Touring re booking outdoor events.
- Jane Driver re perimeter fence to Old Bottom Freedown.
- Graeme Mackenzie IDMB re access to Lighthouse Road.
- Dover Security Services re SF Valley.
- Heather Waller re hole in Beach Road.
- Heather Hetherington Sadler re litter issues in Sea View Road.
- Presentation slides from Neighbourhood Policing meeting.
- Response from David Hannent re Glebe Field.
- Martin Hunt re dumping of garden waste.
- James Apps re highways issues, Sea Street.
- Matthew Fox KCC re new footpath opening ceremony.
- Rob Wilkie re re-surfacing outside 40-42 St Margarets Road.
- Mel Wrigley WCCP re permission letter for Natural England survey.
- Mrs N Powell re parking issues on Bay Hill opposite The Droveaway.
- KCC re Kent and Medway Big Free Bus Weekend.
- Richard Hall re new committee at Tennis Club.

Clerk to deal with permission

11. Reports

- Cllr Checksfield provided brief update re social media presence of the PC - reached out to many local sports groups/community groups in the village. This has shown an increase in followers from 640 to 670.
- Cllr Checksfield provided resume of Dover Area KALC Committee meeting:-
- Chair, Vice chair and Secretary re-elected for another term.

- Discussion regarding a statement David Brazier gave to the Dover Transport Advisory Board - roads in Kent in managed decline due to lack of funds and Highways objections no longer a reason to prevent planning approvals. The statement will be circulated with the KALC minutes but you will also find some references in the national press.
- Some discussion re Councillors not receiving communications from KALC/NALC but may be a case of Councillors not reading them rather than Clerks not forwarding items.
- Regarding the waste consultations around Kent – a request will be made by KALC for the data used to support the proposal to close Richborough waste centre etc. There was a general lack of understanding as to why it doesn't make any money when the site next door does.
- Issue of Clerks' performance reviews discussed.
- Committee expressed a note of thanks to ex Councillor Jennifer Harris.

Report received from Mel Wrigley at WCCP for the South Foreland Valley - attached to minutes.

12. Village Maintenance / Matters affecting the Parish

- (a) Playing field inspection undertaken by Cllr Blake - various outstanding issues being dealt with by Mr Purchase.
- (b) Cllrs Simcox and Checksfield had met with Jane Driver at Braeside Stables to look at question of the removed gate/style. The situation needs more thought as ER41 actually comes to a stop, where the PC footpath walk boards show a circular walk continuing beyond the designated PROW.
- Jane Driver had raised the question of the perimeter fence - the terms of the grazing shows that the PC is not responsible for fencing although given the current yearly renewal the stables may be loath to spend money on this. Clerk asked to write to her in sympathetic tone but check re status of freedown land.
- (c) Clerk had provided draft skeleton document for bench policy - this to be given further consideration.

Cllrs Simcox and Checksfield to consider

Clerk to deal

Clerk to place on future agenda

Cllr Fielding brought up question of signs etc in Lighthouse Road - this is in fact defined as a "restricted byway".

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Confirmed:

Chair

12th June 2023

MEETING REPORT FOR ST MARGARET'S AT CLIFFE PARISH COUNCIL ON MONDAY 12.06.23

NEW COUNCIL POSITIONS

Following the change in control of the council we now hold the current positions:

SHADOW CABINET

Martin – Transport, Licensing and Regulatory Services

Ollie – Community and Corporate Property

COMMITTEES

Martin – Dover Joint Transportation Board

Governance Committee

Ollie - Licensing Committee

Regulatory Committee

Ollie also remains a KCC member and was re-elected to the Deal Town Council and promoted to Mayor.

ADVISORY GROUPS

Ollie and Martin - Dover Beacon and Dover Town Regeneration Project Advisory Group

Ollie - Tides Project Advisory Group

DDC TENANT HOUSING SURVEY

DDC want to hear what DDC tenants think about their housing service through the launch of their new Tenant Housing Survey. Click on the link for more details.

The survey forms part of new measures by the Regulator of Social Housing to ensure consumer standards are being met by social landlords, like DDC, including repairs, conditions and the general tenant experience.

WASTE AND RECYCLING CENTRES

As part of their cost saving measures KCC Waste Management Services are planning to reduce the opening times of the waste and recycling centres at Dover and Deal to five days per week and for the centre in Richborough near Sandwich to close completely. DDC and we are totally opposed to this and have issued a press statement to that effect. Strong representations are being made to KCC with a request that they reconsider this decision.

LOCAL ISSUES

1). BAY CAR PARK

Meetings were held with SMBCA on 15 and 22/05 concerning plans they had for changes to the Bay. DDC officers agreed to consider the suggestions whilst the SMBCA agreed to consult with the Parish Council and wider community concerning their ideas.

2). GLEBE FIELDS

The appeal against the decision to grant ACV status was dismissed on 10 th May and the planning application was refused on 15 th May. Nothing additional to report at present.

2). REACH CLOSE

With respect to the complaints concerning parking I received the following report from Dave Parratt of Community services last month:

I did visit the area and although there are limited areas for signage, I have identified a column (Column Ref GRAG003 DDC Asset) that is suitable however I was awaiting a box of brackets to arrive which I received mid last week so will look to have this put up soon.

On a wider note with the issues around camping (St Margarets Bay) I discussed with Shaun and Brin last week that I would look at a "Warn and Inform" style leaflet that can be handed out during daylight hours in an attempt to kerb any groups staying overnight which as you know we struggle to resource staff to attend during the overnight.

3). PINE EDGE

Following reports from SMBCA of the Potting Shed being listed as a separate dwelling on Zoopla I contacted Planning Enforcement who have agreed to investigate and provide me with an update in due course. I am currently chasing them for that promised update.

4). WHITE CLIFFS HOTEL

I received complaints from Jane that the pond in Chapel Lane was being polluted by building residue from the construction work at the White Cliffs Hotel. I referred your complaints to Planning Enforcement who registered it under reference ENF/23/00189. They promised to forward me the results of their investigations and I am currently chasing them for that update.

N.B: I received the following update from the Enforcement Officer this afternoon:

This is an ongoing investigation. I have contacted the developers requesting that they adhere to the construction management plan (CMP) submitted and subsequently approved by DDC. The requirement for the CMP was to minimise the impact of the development during the construction phase. Please be aware that some of the statements made in this document are not always possible to achieve on a permanent basis but are measures in an attempt to mitigate obvious issues associated with development. I will be monitoring the site periodically to check on progress. If there are any further issues, I am happy for the parish council or affected residents to contact me directly.

5). PSPO SIGNS AT THE DOVER PATROL MEMORIAL

Following on from a suggestion from Jane that we should seek to have No Camping signs placed near the memorial I forwarded a request to Dave Parratt. He has suggested a 1:1 meeting with Jane to discuss further.

6) REPAIRS TO POTHoles ON EXIT TO REACH RD CAR PARK

This is apparently not within the jurisdiction of KCC and Jane requested some advice. We forwarded the email to Keith Watson who said we should report the matter to Parking Services and provided you with a link to the appropriate form. Have heard nothing since.

7). LOCAL PLAN – LAND BETWEEN SALISBURY RD AND THE DROVEWAY

Tony was concerned about statements that have been made in the LOCAL PLAN by DDC about site STM010 particularly as they have declared it to be the most favourable one for development. We forwarded his concerns to Sarah Platt and Ashley Taylor who confirmed that we are now out of Regulation 19 and in the Regulation 20 stage wherein any further consideration rests with the Inspectorate of Planning (PINS). Ashley has recommended that we should now address our concerns to the Programme Manager at PINS.

February to May 2023

White Cliffs Countryside Partnership (WCCP)

Summary of works

12/02/23 – Pines Field

12 Dexter cows grazed since the Autumn in the valley.

Received a telephone call from Matt the grazier at the weekend, he noticed that one of the cows had an eye infection, Ranger Jason assisted Matt to move the dexter back to Sladden farm (along with one other for company) temporarily until the infection had gone. The two cows were returned to the Pines field later the following week in February.

13/02/23 – Pines Field

There was an WCCP staff emergency call out one evening to the valley to investigate a large amount of building materials put into the Pines field which is part of the SSSI.

Pines Field

Work was carried out to manage/remove invasive species. The cows grazed this area during the late winter months, to promote a good sward level for spring and summer flora. A count for rare early spider orchid plants was also carried out in the spring in the compartment.

Central Field

Grassland restoration work was carried out by the volunteer team, removing scrub and tree saplings. Winter and early spring grazing was carried out by the Dexter cattle.

Lighthouse Field

Removal of small trees undertaken in the bird ringing enclosure area. Management also continued to try and reduce the invasive Canadian goldenrod. Repairs made to kissing gates. Winter and spring grazing was carried out by the Dexter cattle.

Wild cherry. Bird ringing enclosure area, after being cleared of encroaching Cherry trees.

17/02/23 – Remembering Volunteer Jonathan Russell. WCCP staff Melanie Wrigley and Jason Moule, and South Foreland valley volunteers attended the funeral of one of the long-term volunteers Jonathan Russell at Canterbury Cathedral. Jonathan has been a volunteer with WCCP and a Looker checking the grazing animals for many years together with his wife Monica. Jonathan will be very sadly missed. WCCP very much appreciate all the voluntary help they have given towards caring for the natural environment. Jonathan's family kindly donated Jonathan's chainsaw to WCCP towards nature conservation habitat management. Thank you.

23/02/23 - Volunteer Task, Central Field

For this task the volunteers aimed their efforts on cutting and raking of the Central compartment, mainly focusing on areas that have become particularly scrubbed over.

8 volunteers were present at this task.

01/03/23 - Lighthouse Field

Small trees were cut out of the Marsh warbler/bird ringing enclosure to allow more light into the area and create space for bird ringing equipment. Also raked up cut material from the Central compartment.

Over the past few years, the marsh warbler enclosure has become very vegetated with tree saplings, mainly Wild Cherry (*Prunus avium*) which is causing difficulty to bird ringers when erecting their nets to catch birds and collecting data. The encroachment of trees may also be a contributing factor in why Marsh Warblers (*Acrocephalus palustris*) have stopped breeding in recent years.

By removing some of these trees, it may promote more favourable breeding habitat for the rare Marsh warblers, encouraging the spread of species like Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and Umbellifers (*Apiaceae*) Species that Marsh warblers favour.

In the coming Autumn, we plan to work alongside volunteer birders, who have offered to help maintain this area. Cuttings were raked up; positioned in the woodland areas to make habitat piles.

Saturday 25/02/23

WCCP was asked by Kent Downs AONB Unit, to jointly lead together with National Trust staff, a group (Muslim Hikers) of 150 people on a guided walk along the White Cliffs of Dover from Langdon Cliffs into South Foreland valley and to the Bay and back. It was the group's first ever organised coastal walk and was their fastest booked up guided walk! Some participants had travelled down the day before from as far away as Birmingham and Leeds, stayed overnight in local accommodation to participate in the White Cliffs guided walk. Melanie Wrigley (WCCP) exchanged information about the plants, animals, chalk grassland habitat, and geology of the chalk cliffs and the megaflood formation of the English Channel and South Foreland valley. It was a delightful day as many people had not been to the coast before and it was great to share our wonderful landscape.

03/03/23 – Central Field

Continuation of raking up grass cuttings in Central compartment. Removing cuttings reduces fertility of the soil which keeps the chalk grassland plants. Otherwise, coarse grasses would become dominant smothering the flowers and herbs important for the butterflies, bees, moths and so on.

06/03/23 – Pines/Central Field

The 12 Dexter were moved from Pines field over onto the Central field to finish off grazing, getting the sward levels in good condition before the summer flowering period.

Alan removing invasive tree sapling out of the grassland.

Volunteers: Bernadette and Andrew, raking up cutting from out last task.

The volunteers, removing invasives such as cotoneaster and mowing the rides.

16/03/23 – Pines Field

The volunteers used the mower and hand tools to remove particularly dense areas of low growing, Cotoneaster (a garden escape) growing in the chalk grassland. This on-going management is to ensure the reduction and spreading of the plant and its berries, which would eventually out compete our native plant species.

8 volunteers took part in the task.

19/03/23 – Sunday Volunteer Task, Pines Field

3 volunteers took part.

Continued the work done in the previous week, removed invasives from the grassland and raked up what has already been cut. Joined by our new volunteer Bernadette on her first task in the valley.

Wilfred the Dexter at the corral, waiting to be moved onto Lighthouse field.

Vandalised kissing gates in lighthouse field.

28/03/23 – Lighthouse Field

With help from our grazier Matt, we repaired 2 kissing gates in Lighthouse field that had been vandalised. The metal latches and hinges had been removed it is unknown who vandalised the gates.

Since then, there have not been any related incidents. After the gates were repaired and the perimeter fence had been checked along with the water trough, the cows were moved onto Lighthouse field to finish off the last grazing compartment before the spring/summer.

06/04/23 – Lighthouse Field

A member of the public contacted WCCP to report that a cow had escaped from lighthouse field. This was due to a damaged fence; repairs were made, and the cow was returned to the compartment.

11/05/23 – Lighthouse Field

The focus was on path management, keeping rides and paths open that were overgrown with vegetation, as well as cutting and clearing around the rare juniper bushes that were getting dominated by tree saplings.

Left to Right: Cleared path and Juniper bushes cleared of tree saplings.

Scarification work carried out on Lighthouse field. The volunteers raking up the goldenrod cuttings. Doreen and Bernadette, removing invasives. Chris mowing the Canadian goldenrod in bottom of

Lighthouse field.

25/05/23 – Volunteer Task, Lighthouse field

6 Volunteers took part.

For our end of May volunteer task, we focused on more invasive species management, removing small saplings and we also concentrated on cutting more of the Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*) regrowth. Each year the goldenrod has continued to spread in the valley, even with the management we are undertaking to control it. As an experiment, we have tried scarifying areas with use of a brushcutter, this is a management technique we have not tested before, so it will be interesting to see whether the plants rhizomes will survive such intense management. Last Summer a small amount was cut down with a brushcutter closer to the base of the stem rather than being topped by a mower, and this appears to have reduced the regrowth. If this method proves to be effective, this will be carried out on the remaining areas of grassland containing the goldenrod.

Left to right: The rare Early-spider orchid (90 found this year), rare Nottingham catchfly (moth pollinated) and Wild mignonette (good nectar and pollen source)

Sainfoin, made an appearance this year on the Central field, not a regular plant in the valley.

Horse-shoe vetch, in abundance this year, the caterpillar food plant for Chalk-hill and Adonis blue butterfly.

Yellow shell moth Mother Shipton moth Common blue butterfly

Wildlife Sightings

01/03/23 – 2 woodcock, Lighthouse field – Jason Moule

06/03/23 – Woodcock, chiffchaff, firecrest, Raven, Peregrine – Jason Moule

19/03/23 – Red-rumped swallow – lower Pines field – Jason Moule

25/03/23 – Alpine swift, seen over Lighthouse field - Jamie Partridge

07/04/23 - Short-toed treecreeper – Jamie Partridge

05/05/23 – Early-spider orchids – 89 spikes were recorded this year on Pines field and a single one still on Central field, Total 90 tripling the number of last year's total.

16/05/23 – Osprey – Jamie Partridge

24/05/23 – Honey Buzzard – Jamie Partridge

25/05/23 –Dingy Skipper butterfly, Mother Shipton moth, Yellow-shell moth and Firecrest, Sainfoin and Nottingham catchfly – Jason Moule.

28/05/23 – 2 Hawfinch – Jamie Partridge

28/05/23 - 2 Bee Eaters – Rich Bosnor

Report by Jason Moule and Melanie Wrigley, WCCP. 06/06/2023

