

HORTON KIRBY AND SOUTH DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES of the ANNUAL PARISH MEETING of the PARISH COUNCIL held on

15th May 2017 in the Village Hall, South Darenth at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr I Blackamore
Cllrs R House, D Mitchell, T Moyle, C Page, P Rushbrook, M Stead, J Stewart,
C Willson

Cllr P McGarvey, District Councillor

Members of the public: Mrs M Seal MBE, A Seal, Mrs B Bradley, P & M Fifield (Scouts),
M Dunn (DRiPS) D & A Hollands, S Dove, A & K Dring, S Dring, J & C Fitzpatrick,
Jackie (SPCA), E Hattley and 15 members of public. Stg P Ballard (Kent Police)

In attendance: H Rohard, Parish Clerk
D McFall, Assistant Parish Clerk

1 WELCOME FROM CHAIRMAN

Cllr Blackamore welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2 REPORTS

District Councillor Philip McGarvey: presented his report which is attached

County Councillor Roger Gough: was unable to attend and sent his written report, attached.

PCSO: the PCSO was unable to attend and Sgt Peter Ballard represented Kent Police in her absence.

Stg Ballard reported that PCSO Sarah Douse is now training to become a Police Officer and that PCSO Amy Hardy is covering the Parish. Further budget cuts however mean there are 15 PCSOs in the district instead of 20. There will be further restructuring later in the year to free up investigating officers time which will also have an impact on PCSO work loads.

Stg Ballard stated that he was unaware of any issues in South Darenth but of some in Sutton at Hone (Dartford)

1 Member of the public questioned whether a new park would encourage youths from out of area to come to Heathside and create more anti social behaviour. Cllr Rushbrook responded that lighting had already been requested by PCSO Douse in Heathside to encourage youngsters to use the space responsibly. Another members of the public suggested CCTV could be used in Heathside and the area monitored. Discussion followed on the use of CCTV. Member of public concluded that a new park was positive for local youngsters but concerned about attracting anti social behaviour.

Stg Ballard encouraged residents to report any incidents or anti-social behaviour to 101; one member of the public stated that she had waited 15 minutes to have a call answered to 101. Stg Ballard said that he was aware that there had been issues with call time to 101 and hoped these were now resolved.

A report from the PCSO would be emailed to the Clerk.

The Chairman suggested that a further meeting be arranged specifically for members of the public to discuss local policing issues and for Sutton at Hone & Hawley Parish Council to be invited along with Dartford area Police. ACTION: Clerk to liaise.

Darent River Preservation Society

Malcolm Dunn reported that the river was in good condition however there were concerns that with the dry winter and spring water levels were lower than usual for this time of year.

DRiPS is now working closely with NWKCP, EA and River Trust to promote and safeguard the river.

River Maintenance volunteer days have been welcomed and it is hoped that other Parishes will follow suit encouraging their residents to get involved in the care of the Darent.

Malcolm invited visitors to look at photos that he had brought along after the meeting.

Local History Society: Terry Moyle introduced himself as the Chair of the LHS and explained the meeting times and dates, with details of speakers to come. He would be delighted to welcome any new members or visitors to the Society.

3 CHAIRMANS REPORT

Cllr Blackamore gave the following report:

It has been another busy year for the Parish Council with several exciting projects in the pipeline.

The financial stability of the council is a priority and the income from our assets such as both halls, Westminster Fields Pavilion and rental income from Heathside looking healthy with many regular and repeat bookings for the halls keeping the office busy.

On the subject of the office, we welcome our newest member of staff, Dawn. Heather had requested a reduction in her working hours; the search for an assistant clerk began. We were fortunate to poach Dawn from another council to work alongside Heather in the day-to-day running of a busy office. Without Heathers expertise and guidance, the jobs of the parish Councillors would be impossible and I'm sure we all appreciate her commitment greatly. Dawn brings expertise and a fresh approach to the management of the council.

Works to the Village hall here in the last year include a new flat roof, tiled roof overhaul and new bargeboards, interior decorating and a CCTV system to cover the car park and office.

During the last year we have staged 3 community events. Our new inflatable day in Westminster Fields, our annual firework display in November and the recent St.

Georges day event at Heathside. All 3 events were enjoyed immensely by all with plenty of positive feedback.

Thanks to a grant from KCC the Parish Council was able to renovate the bus shelter on Horton Road.

The appearance of KCC owned roadside verges has been preserved with a new contract managed by the Parish Council to maintain such areas, awarded after a tendering process. This means grass cutting frequency is not in danger if being reduced. Responsibility for swathe cutting and hedges still remain with KCC.

The Parish Council was given the opportunity to purchase the land used for allotment provision from the existing land owner and it was agreed a prudent move would be to also buy the land adjacent for a future burial ground but in the meantime continue the lease to Wide Horizons for environmental studies.

In the spring, verges in East Hill South Darenth and Jacobs Lane, Horton Kirby were a mass of new daffodils planted by volunteers the previous autumn.

Volunteers have also completed 2 litter picks and 2 river maintenance days and a day working in 100-year wood. With this level of volunteer support and an estimated Parish Councillors voluntary time of over 1000 hours in the last year alone, our villages will continue to be enjoyed by the majority of those who live here.

There are many people in the villages who volunteer their time with local groups and the Parish Council is pleased to support them where possible with Grants being made to South Darenth Village Society, Horton Kirby Bowls Club, Scouts, Brownies, NWKent Volunteer Centre and Kent Air Ambulance in the last year.

Finally, congratulations to Roger Gough on his re-election to KCC and his continual support on local issues along with Philip McGarvey from SDC for his enthusiasm and advice. Last but by no means least, THANK YOU to all of the parish Councillors for their hard work and commitment over the last year.

Thank you.

4 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

A member of the public asked whether Arriva buses were required to stop at the bench opposite Turners Café as she had been ignored by passing buses whilst waiting there.

Cllr Page responded that although it is not a designated bus stop there is a 'Hail and Stop' arrangement in place to enable residents to stop the bus in other prominent places other than designated Bus Stops. The Clerk was asked by the Chairman to write to Arriva for clarification on this.

A member of public asked when the 'shrink wrap' would be removed from the Chimney. Cllr McGarvey responded that SDC are aware and monitoring the situation. The Clerk was asked by the Chairman to liaise with Crabtree Management Co and Cllr McGarvey.

5 PRESENTATIONS TO VOLUNTEERS

The Chairman and the Vice Chairman presented framed certificates and chocolates to the following volunteers to publically thank them for their hard work in making the

villages a better place to live. The Volunteers were warmly applauded as they collected their certificates:

Dave Hollands (SPCA), Ashley Dring, Henry Wassell, Shannon Dring and Morgan Fifield (Scouts) were thanked for their commitment to making the Parish Beacon for the Queen's 90th Birthday celebrations.

Eve Hattley was thanked for her commitment to helping keep the villages litter free.

Caitlin Fitzpatrick was thanked for her commitment to managing the Parish Council website.

Malcolm Dunn was thanked for his commitment to being the Parish DRiPS representative over many years

Marjory Seal MBE was thanked for her commitment over many years to volunteering in the villages.

Marjory expressed her thanks for the recognition and how she has enjoyed her many years living in South Darenth and being part of the local community.

6 PRESENTATION OF KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS AWARD

This framed certificate from KALC and signed by the High Sheriff of Kent was presented by the Chairman and the Vice Chairman to Barbara Bradley in recognition of all her hard work over many years with the local Scouts, WI and Lions Club.

Barbara expressed her thanks for the Award and explained how rewarding volunteering can be; not only is it helping the local community but helps the individual to feel part of the community.

The Chairman closed the meeting and invited everyone to stay for tea and cake and to chat to members of the Parish Council and local organisations represented.

The meeting ended at 9.24pm

Chairman:

Date: