

**Minutes of Postling Parish Council meeting held at Postling Village Hall
on Tuesday 25 July 2023 at 6.30pm**

1. Attendance and apologies for absence

Attending: Chairman Frank Hobbs, Cllrs Helen Calderbank, Christine Hobbs, John Pattrick, Daniel Shaddick, Charlie Wilkins, Parish Clerk Clare Hamilton, County Councillor Susan Carey, District Councillor Jenny Hollingsbee and one member of the public.

Apologies: District Councillor Elaine Martin.

2. **It was resolved** unanimously to accept the Minutes of meetings held on 23 May and 30 May 2023.

3. There were no members' declarations of interest on Agenda items.

4. The Public Participation session was held at the end of the meeting.

5. Co-option of a Parish Councillor

Following the retirement of Yvonne Mumford at the local elections in May 2023, FHDC informed the parish council that a councillor may be appointed by co-option. Three applications were received by the deadline of 5pm on 17 July, two applicants have since withdrawn their applications.

A meeting has been arranged on 1 August to confirm the co-option.

6. There were no matters arising not included on the Agenda.

7. Planning Applications received since last meeting, circulated to Councillors for comments, outcomes of those deliberations, and to consider any applications received since this agenda was published:

a. **23/0635/FH Tolsford House, The Street, Postling CT21 4EU**

Dismantling of a redundant truncated chimney stack to the north elevation, replacement windows, repairs and other minor alterations.
PPC Supports. FHDC Approved.

b. **23/0580/FH Pent Farm, Pilgrims Way CT21 4EY**

Photovoltaic solar array, ancillary infrastructure, and landscaping.
A public meeting was held on Tuesday 30 May at 6.30pm at Postling Village Hall to hear residents' views on this application.
PPC Objection. Awaiting FHDC decision.

c. **19/1258/FH Postling Lodge, Farthing Common CT18 8DQ**

Retrospective planning permission for a grounds maintenance building and entrance gate accessed from Loughborough Lane at Postling Lodge
PPC Objection. Awaiting FHDC decision.
Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee aiming to hold meeting with head of planning

d. Other planning matters:

- FHDC is exploring the possibility of a solar park on land adjoining Otterpool Park
- Farthing Common reservoir lay-by reinstatement: waiting to hear from planning dept when this will be reinstated
- Concerns re. The Outlook were raised. Planning permission is in place and work has commenced.

8. Highways

a. Pot holes marked on Cuckoo Lane: no further information. Work was originally expected to be carried out in July/August

Chairman Frank Hobbs

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- b. KCC Cllr Brazier has stated all reported potholes will be repaired by September, but it is recommended to keep reporting any problems
- c. Loughborough Lane: potholes are on the works programme but it is worthwhile reporting again
- d. Sandling Road: kerbstones were recently installed but councillors queried why in that location when another location appears more pressing. Parishioner present explained it is for safety of buses.

9. Finance

- a. Balance of account at 25 July 2023: £6,759.14

- b. Payments and Receipts since last meeting:

Payments

HSBC	bank charges	8.00
C Hamilton	Plaque reimbursement	143.88
Signs Engraving	Plaque delivery	8.34
HSBC	bank charges	8.00
Zurich Mun.	Insurance premium	299.05
KALC	Annual subs	176.02
Postling Church	Donation	200.00
C Hamilton	Salary April May	395.89
C Hamilton	Travel exp May meetings	14.40
C Hamilton	Election fees reimbursement	60.13
HSBC	bank charges	8.00
Age UK	Donation	100.00
Air Ambulance	Donation	250.00
HSBC	bank charges	8.00

Receipts

HMRC	VAT reclaim 2022/23	80.02
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- c. Expenditure due before next meeting:

C Hamilton	Salary June July	395.89
HSBC	Bank charges June July	16.00

It was resolved to approve expenditure. Proposed Cllr Christine Hobbs, seconded

Cllr John Patrick, all in favour, approved by the Chairman.

Bank charges were queried, and it was suggested Barclays and Metro Bank do not charge fees - clerk to enquire.

- d. External auditor has acknowledged receipt of the AGAR Exemption Certificate and no further action needs to be taken until next year's AGAR.

10. Reports from District and County Councillors - see Appendix.

11. Otterpool Park Working Group

Set up under the KALC umbrella, the Group held its inaugural meeting on 6 July when five parish councils neighbouring the Otterpool site were represented. Terms of reference were agreed and it was suggested each PC raise a sum to pay the secretary. The Strategic Design Principles have been approved and the Strategic Design document is available from the Chairman to view. Parishes are invited to draw up a wish list from CIL and s106 funds. Next Working Group meeting is 7 September.

12. For Information

- No information has been received on progress with bus shelter at Newbarn corner; Chairman to enquire with Cllr Roger Joyce.
- KCC's consultation on its new draft Emerging Local Transport Plan circulated to councillors
- 2023 meeting dates: 6.30pm on 26 September and 28 November.

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Public Participation

A parishioner requested the parish council makes enquiries regarding a potential breach of planning regulations at a local farm where it appears there has been a change of use from agricultural to equestrian facilities with an active livery and riding school. Also, to enquire if planning permission has been obtained for the use of a caravan as a permanent dwelling. This matter will be reported to FHDC for investigation.

Cllr Jenny Hollingsbee recommended the parishioner reports their concerns regarding potential pollutants at the site directly to the Environment Agency.

Meeting closed at 7.40pm.

Signed..... Cllr Frank Hobbs, Chairman, 26 September 2023

Appendix

Reports from District and County Councillors

North Downs West District Councillor's Report

As Leader of the Conservative Opposition Group, I have regular monthly meetings with the Chief Executive and the Leader. At the full Council on 21 June I asked the Leader to confirm the Administration's position on Otterpool Park. He confirmed the project would go ahead and 'at pace'.

On Nuclear Energy, I attended a presentation by EDF at Dungeness where they outlined the current position and talked about the future of Dungeness. At the moment they employ 945 people. They talked about the Small Modular Re-actors that are being developed and the discussions that were taking place with Government and a Ministerial visit has taken place. We await further news.

I was pleased to be co-opted to the Kent & Medway Police & Crime Panel – a panel I served on for quite a few years when I was the representative of the District Council. Please do register with www.mycommunityvoicekent.co.uk to keep in touch with local policing teams. The service sends updates about your local area directly from the police officers themselves.

Ward Grant Application forms and guidance can be found at www.folkestone-hythe.gov.uk/community

The Otterpool Park Zest Festival and Otterpool Gallops were very successful and other events are planned. To find out more and to see the Learning Programme do check the website regularly www.otterpoolpark.org a consultation on Phase 1b 'Creating a Vision for Hill Top and Woodland Ridge' will take place on 9 September 11am-4pm at Sellindge Village Hall. This is open to anyone who would like to get involved or have an influence. JTP Architects Masterplanners Placemakers have been appointed to undertake this work.

Otterpool Park LLP has teamed up with [Strange Cargo](#) once again to run creative workshops at Westenhanger Castle throughout the school summer holidays. Returning for its second year, Otterpool Green Stars (OGS) is an initiative that encourages young people to think about their environment and the future. The events will be held every Tuesday from 10am to 2pm throughout the holidays, from 25 July - 29 August. They are suitable for children aged 4 and over and will cost just £3 per child.

Unfortunately, I have been replaced on the Otterpool Park LLP by the Leader of the Labour Group and elected member for East Folkestone and I have not been appointed to the Town & Parish Councils joint Committee.

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It's good to see so much of the work of the previous administration come to fruition including the new toilets (complete with solar panels) at the Lower Leas Park in Folkestone, the Tall Ships project for our young people, the Red Arrows at the Air Show in Folkestone on 20 August and more EV electric charging points (in partnership with KCC and with Government funding) across the district.

Contact: jenny.hollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk Mobile 07887919459

KCC Report

KCC is holding several public consultations from topics as diverse as the Minerals & Waste Local Plan, the Local Transport Plan for Kent, the Community Warden Service, Family Hubs, the Household Waste Recycling network and (perhaps the most important of all) our 2024/25 budget which is about what level of council tax increase people would support and which services should take priority when we make savings. The best way to take part is to register via letstalkkent.gov.uk or you can get a hard copy from a library.

KCC does not run bus services in Kent but KCC does administer the issuing of the Older Person's Bus Pass, arranges school transport for eligible pupils and we also subsidise the Kent Travel Saver for young people (this is something we choose to do but are not required to do). Our Public Transport Team works with the bus companies but we do not control them. Sadly, the number of people using the buses has not returned to pre-Covid levels despite initiatives such as the Government's £2 cap on bus fares and Stagecoach is now proposing to consolidate its services so that it has a more sustainable network. In other words it intends to only run buses where the number of people travelling covers the cost of running the service.

KCC put in a bid to Government for a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and have won £16.1m which can be used for initiatives to boost bus travel. A large part of this funding is being used to freeze the cost of the Kent Travel Saver bus pass for young people. (Currently £450 for standard pass and £120 for low-income households.) The 16+ Travel Saver Pass is also frozen at £500. BSIP funding was also used for the free travel weekend (24/25 June) and this led to an increase of around 34% in the number of people travelling. Other initiatives include free bus travel for families on low income during the school holidays (eligible families will automatically receive a voucher) and extending the hours that Concessionary bus passes can be used in August. Whilst we can't use the BSIP money to subsidise bus services that have no realistic prospect of ever becoming viable, our Public Transport Team is working to secure some of the threatened services as part of our tendering process for school bus services. There is a summary of changes proposed by the bus companies on the KCC website <https://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/travelling-around-kent/bus-travel/bus-services-in-kent> and the bus companies themselves should be communicating any proposed changes.

You may have seen reports in the media that KCC is currently involved in legal action against the Government. The Government's National Transfer Scheme, which is supposed to share the burden of dealing with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) between all local authorities, is not working effectively. The rate of arrivals of UASC in Kent is greater than our capacity to care for them. It's a very serious problem and it is regrettable that we have had to go to the High Court for resolution.

It's been confirmed that KCC will be taking the lead for Kent and Medway in creating a Local Nature Recovery Strategy. This is a requirement of the 2021 Environment Act and the purpose of the strategy is to 'identify locations to create or provide habitat most likely to provide the greatest benefit for nature and provide other environmental benefits, such as carbon sequestration, flood and water management and nature-rich places that support improved health and wellbeing.' The Government is providing funding for this work which will involve consultation with farmers, landowners and the wider public and we expect to have strategy tailored for Kent and Medway by May 2025. It's a real recognition of the importance of nature and an opportunity I hope we can all welcome.

Susan Carey, Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council.

KCC's Cabinet Member for Environment

Email susan.carey@kent.gov.uk

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