

Minutes of the **FULL COUNCIL** meeting held at Parish Office, Lower Green Recreation Ground on Monday **8 April 2024** at 7.15pm.



Councillors Present:

Cllr K Brooks (Chair)	Cllr C Snow
Cllr N Stratton (Vice-Chair)	Cllr M Weaver
Cllr A Birch	Cllr J Webster
Cllr D Reilly	

Apologies:

Cllr M Barrett	Cllr G Hall
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Absent:

Cllr V Gautam

Officers Present:

H Munro (Clerk)

23/518. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Apologies were received from Cllrs M Barrett and G Hall. The apologies and reason were accepted.

23/519. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.** Cllr Reilly declared an interest in item 23/528 as his wife had prepared the meeting report.

23/520. **CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

- The Chair thanked Cllr Hall for his hard work as Chair of the Planning & Highways Committee from which he had now stood down.
- The Chair thanked everyone for attending the litter pick. She also thanked We Waste and the Rapid Relief Team for their contribution.

23/521. **OPEN SESSION.** No members of the public were present.

23/522. **MINUTES.** It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of 4 March, 15 March and 25 March 2024 be approved, and they were signed by the Chair as an accurate record.

23/523. **COMMITTEE MINUTES.** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the draft minutes of the following committees:

- Planning & Highways Committee – 18 March 2024.

23/524. **CLERK'S REPORT.** The following report was noted:

- a. Appeal against Enforcement Notice – The Meadows, Past Heap Farm.
An update from the Planning Inspector is awaited.

- b. Trees to be planted in Belfield Road. The landowner has agreed in principle to allow tree planting in the verge. A public consultation is currently taking place for all nearby residents. No objections have been received.
- c. Urgent work to memorials. Work to remaining memorials at Pembury Burial Grounds to be scheduled shortly.
- d. Additional Equipment for PA System. Funds have been allocated to an earmarked reserve. The equipment to be purchased in due course.
- e. Photography Competition. Advertising has now begun.
- f. Vandalism / damage. Recent anti-social behaviour in Lower Green Recreation Ground were noted. Reports of thefts from allotment sheds were noted. Tenants have been encouraged to report this to the police. Another allotment gate padlock is broken which could be linked to the break-ins.
- g. The Pembury Gardeners would hold their plant sale on the Village Green on Saturday 25 May 8am to 1pm.
- h. The Clerk thanked the Deputy Clerk for her contribution to the Parish Council prior to her leaving.

23/525. **REPORT OF COUNTY/BOROUGH COUNCILLORS.** Apologies were received from Borough Councillors Barrington-King, Hayward and Roberts due to other engagements. Cllr Birch reported that she is standing in the forthcoming Borough Council elections.

23/526. **EXTERNAL BODIES.** There were none.

23/527. **COMMITTEE CHAIR.** Following the resignation of Cllr Hall as Chair of the Planning and Highways Committee Chair, nominations were invited. It was **RESOLVED** that Cllr Reilly be appointed as Chair. Cllr Brooks was appointed to the committee as Vice Chair.

23/528. **PLANNING APPLICATIONS.** 24/00431/FULL – Downingbury Farm, Maidstone Road – Conversion of cold store and stables into 2no. dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

It was **RESOLVED** to submit the following response to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC):

SUPPORT subject to a robust construction plan being in place. There are concerns that the application is silent on sewerage.

23/529. **APPEAL AGAINST ENFORCMENT NOTICES.**

Planning Appeal Reference APP/M2270/C/24/3339249 Land At Redwings Lane Pembury Tunbridge Wells Appeal against Enforcement Notice JS/T019044/A - Without planning permission the material change of use of land from agriculture to a mixed use of agriculture, equestrian and the stationing of two caravans in residential use including a timber lean to, a portable toilet along with the associated storage of vehicle trailers, two storage containers, domestic vehicles and the construction of a timber framed building and hard gravel surface – ref: 23/02302/FULL - the Ranch UK, Redwings Lane.

Planning Appeal Reference APP/M2270/C/24/3339251 Land At Redwings Lane Pembury Tunbridge Wells Appeal against Enforcement Notice JS/T019044/A - Without planning permission the material change of use of land from agriculture to a mixed use of agriculture, equestrian and the stationing of two caravans in residential use including a timber lean to, a portable toilet along with the associated storage of vehicle trailers, two storage containers, domestic vehicles and the construction of a timber framed building and hard gravel surface – ref: 23/02303/FULL – the Ranch UK, Redwings Lane.

It was **RESOLVED** to submit the following response to the Planning Inspectorate for both appeals:

Pembury Parish Council **STRONGLY OBJECTS** to the above-referenced applications for the following reasons:

- a. The application to grant retrospective consent for a traveller site (temporary or permanent) in the Green Belt is considered inappropriate development and should not be approved. The proposed site is located in an unsustainable location outside the Limits to Built Development settlement boundaries of Pembury which is contrary to the Pembury Neighbourhood Plan (PNP) policy P1A and B. It would fail to conserve and enhance the rural landscape character of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty as well as causing harm to the openness of the Green Belt. The applicant has not identified any needs that are unlikely to clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm so as to establish very special circumstances to grant approval.
- b. The Borough Council is able to demonstrate an up-to-date five-year supply of deliverable Gypsy and Traveller pitches within the Borough as at 1st April 2023 whilst additional capacity within existing sites has also been identified in the Emerging Local Plan. This is also contrary to PNP Policy P2A. A rural exception site policy is therefore not considered appropriate for this site.
- c. The proposal is sited within Source Protection Zone 1 and 2 (Aquifer) which is sensitive to the risk of contamination. There is insufficient

information to demonstrate that the risk of contamination of ground water from the waste and contaminated run-off arising from this development can be adequately managed. There are also insufficient details regarding waste disposal as the site is not served by a mains sewer.

- d. The proposal is not accompanied by an integral landscaping scheme outlining boundary treatments, detailing access and parking facilities and confirming whether external lighting is needed. The site is a Dark Sky Zone, and the application needs to demonstrate that, if external lighting is needed, the night sky will be protected from light pollution in line with PNP Policy P12.
- e. It is understood that the agricultural land in this application is classified Grade 2. Government guidance seeks to protect the "best and most versatile" agricultural land from significant, inappropriate or unsustainable development proposals and to promote the sustainable management of soils. The building of isolated permanent structures and associated hardstanding will make this difficult.
- f. The locally significant views should be protected in line with PNP, Policy 11. The View 9 panoramic view is impacted by this development. The view takes in Kent Collage, the Reservoir, Ancient Woodland, the Parish Church of St Peter's and across to the North Downs.
- g. The proposal site is also located in a 'Designated Aquifer Protection Zone' in close proximity to Pembury Reservoir which is located to the North West of the development.
- h. PPC support the concerns of the Environmental Agency regarding groundwater vulnerability in their Technical Note prepared for TWBC dated 25th October 2023 "The recent group of Planning Applications at land Off Redwings Lane, including land uses and activities, pose a risk to the groundwater environment. The risks include polluting run off from stables and the siting of mobile homes with their associated foul drainage and fuel storage requirements. The applications are located in SPZ1 associated with the springs, and above the spring collection system and other South East Water infrastructure, and as such are within the most groundwater vulnerable area. The number of applications across the wider site, which appear at times to have overlapping red line boundaries, has been significant. These applications have not provided sufficient information to assure us that proposed activities will be sufficiently protective of the groundwater environment. The applicants have demonstrated a lack of environmental awareness, in particular groundwater vulnerability, at this site and in the wider Pembury area".

- i. PPC also supports the concerns of South East Water about the pollution risk to the water supply. They strongly objected to application 23/02303 confirming "... These applications are on land within Source Protection Zone (SPZ) 1 and 2 of our spring system that supplies our Pembury reservoir. SPZs are designated by the Environment Agency to provide additional protection to safeguard drinking water supplies through constraining the proximity of an activity that may impact upon drinking water abstractions... The springs that flow into Pembury reservoir are fed by the Tunbridge Wells Sands Formation which are unconfined, therefore any manure storage will have to be completely contained, there is also a risk of veterinary medicines, sewerage from the dwelling proposed, fuel oil storage and potentially any other chemical applied for weed control around the buildings and perimeter of the proposed developments at this location, which would pollute the underground water source, as well as direct surface run off into the reservoir, which caters for a population of approximately fifty thousand in the Tunbridge Wells and Pembury areas".

23/530. **LOCATION OF FULL COUNCIL MEETINGS.** It was **RESOLVED** that meetings return to the Parish Office meeting room.

23/531. **PARISH COUNCILLOR RECRUITMENT.** Ideas to recruit new councillors were considered. Ideas included putting flyers into book bags at Pembury Primary School, encouraging people to come and speak to councillors about the role at the next Annual Parish Meeting, including an article in the next PVN, writing articles about why individual councillors joined the Parish Council and what they got from it as well as increasing social media posts. Existing councillors were also encouraged to speak to their contacts directly.

23/532. **FINANCIAL INFORMATION.** It was **RESOLVED** to approve the Accounts for Payment for April 2024 of £38,010.27. A transfer from NatWest to Unity Bank of £20,000 was approved by **RESOLUTION**. Approved payments are listed in Appendix 1.

23/533. **RISKS.** There were none.

23/534. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.** The following issues were raised:

- Parking in Snipe Close – Cllr Birch to liaise with the County Councillor.
- There was no location reference number of the defibrillator at the Pavilion. Cllr Stratton to report to the Management committee.
- New office telephone system required when analogue lines are switched off. A local company that could assist was recommended. Cllr Reilly declared an interest in the company as he worked for them.

- Vandalism – concern was raised about the increase in vandalism in Lower Green Recreation Ground. A police presence would be requested when the next incident occurred. CCTV to be considered.

23/535. **FUTURE MEETINGS.** The following dates were noted:

- a. Annual Parish Meeting – Thursday 25 April 2024 at 7.15pm at Pembury Village Hall.
- b. Full Council – Annual Parish Council Meeting – Monday 15 May 2024 at 7.15pm in the Parish Office Meeting Room.

23/536. Pursuant to Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, it was **RESOLVED** to exclude the public and press from the meeting at 8:24pm for the next items of business on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information.

23/537. **LEGAL MATTERS.** The update was noted.

23/538. **HR MATTERS.** Terms and conditions for new staff were considered, and it was **RESOLVED** that the following be agreed for all new permanent staff employed from this date:

- Holiday – as per Green Book Terms.
- Sick Pay – as per Green Book terms up to 2 months full pay and 2 months half pay after 2 years employment.
- Maternity / paternity / parental leave pay – in line with statutory payments.
- Pay scales for non-statutory roles no longer used. An annual salary or hourly rate to be set for each role. The salary to be reviewed by the Parish Council on an annual basis.

The Parish Council is currently part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). There were concerns about the on-going liabilities of this scheme. After much discussion the following decisions were agreed by **RESOLUTION:**

- Cllrs Birch and Stratton to undertake more research into the scheme and ascertain a better understanding of the Parish Council's liabilities.
- A new Earmarked Reserve to be created to build up funds for future pension liabilities.
- A salary sacrifice scheme to be considered.

- All new staff to be enrolled into the NEST pension scheme until further information about the LGPS was available. The next valuation was due at 31 March 2025.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 21:28pm

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Chair

Pembury Parish Council			
Our Ref:	Payee	Description	Total £
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT - PAID			
03/185	Clear Councils	Insurance premium 2024-25	5,471.87
03/186	SKF Contractors	Old Church tarmac path	6,758.40
			12,230.27
ACCOUNTS FOR PAYMENT BY BACS - APRIL 2024			
04/001	HMRC	Tax/NI	2,702.13
04/002	Kent Pension Fund	Pensions	2,822.94
04/003	BG Works	PVN spring edition printing	1,768.80
04/004	Alison Eardley	Professional planning advice	306.00
04/005	Kidmans	Grounds maintenance equipment servicing & supplies Feb	1,651.01
04/006	Kidmans	Grounds maintenance equipment servicing & supplies Mar	1,885.33
04/007	B&Q	Bark for floral display / wildflower mix	44.16
04/008	Bright Sparks	Remedial work to electrics at office & depot	207.12
04/009	Tivoli	Dog bin empties March 2024	151.20
04/010	Wise Stonecraft	Grave digging	1,200.00
04/011	Les Steward	Return allotment deposit	50.00
04/012	Downsview	Memorial repairs	1,140.00
04/013	New Dreams	Office cleaning - Jan, Feb and Mar	180.00
04/014	KCC	Hanging Baskets - licence	37.00
04/015	Southern Care Maintenance	Fire extinguisher maintenance	694.32
04/016	Heliocentrix	New laptop & monitor/monthly IT charges	1,470.49
04/017	Streetlights	Replace column door	126.00
04/018	Rialtas	Omega accounts support & maintenance	889.20
04/019	Capel Groundcare	Playground equipment repair	2,349.69
			14,840.01
DEBIT CARD - MARCH 2024			
DC 03/86	Post Office	Postage	24.00
DC 03/87	Boon Trading (My Projector Lamps)	New lamp for projector	107.08
			131.08
DIRECT DEBITS - MARCH 2024			
DD 03/161	Wex	Fuel Charges	21.60
DD 03/162	SSE	Unmetered Supply electricity	174.82
DD 03/163	SSE	Office electricity	404.34
DD 03/164	BT	Telephone & Broadband	77.57
DD 03/165	Wex	Fuel Charges	93.80
DD 03/166	Castle Water	Water - Woodside	12.19
DD 03/167	Castle Water	Water - Lower Green Cemetery	6.72
DD 03/168	Castle Water	Water - Pembury Burial Grounds	7.88
DD 03/169	Sage	Payroll support	15.60
DD 03/170	Castle Water	Water - allotments	2.47
DD 03/171	Castle Water	Water - Lower Green Rec	1,676.31
DD 03/172	Veolia	Waste charges	88.08
DD 03/173	O2	Mobile phone charges	102.10
			2,683.48

CONFIDENTIAL SALARIES -MARCH 2024			
CS 03/12			8,125.43
TOTAL EXTERNAL PAYMENTS			38,010.27
Internal Payments - April 2024			
Chq 5074	Pembury Parish Council	Funds for Unity Bank Account	£ 20,000.00
TOTAL INTERNAL PAYMENTS			£ 20,000.00