

EAST PECKHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council, Mrs M Piscina,
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21st September 2023

Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023

7pm in the Jubilee Hall Meeting Room

1. Apologies for absences and absentees:

Present: Councillors M. Williams, D. Seal, M. Barton, T. Eastwood, M. Joannes, L. Browning, R. Mewett, D. Fairless, County Councillor S. Hudson, Borough Councillor M. Boughton, Parish Clerk, 2 residents

Apologies: Councillors T. Fryer and S. North

2. Declarations of Interests and/or lobbying

None

3. Minutes of the previous meeting

It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023 were a true and accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed: Councillor T. Eastwood, Seconded: Councillor M. Joannes, All in favour

4. To receive an update on items discussed and resolved at the last meeting

The Parish clerk confirmed that the grass cutting at St Michael's was done on Friday 8th September. The Parish Clerk gave an update on The Holiday Hub: it was very successful, attracting on average 70 individuals a week, each week. Total budget spend was approximately £180 so well under budget. It was far more work than anticipated due to amount of time required to tidy up afterwards – not everyone cleared up after their activities and there was quite a mess. Future consideration to be given if run again, to type of activities and who could oversee it.

Updates on the Kitchen refurbishment, Carpark resurfacing, Gates to the children's playground, Jubilee Hall public toilets proposal were given under the Assets update. Sewage Policy was covered under the Climate update

5. Elections and Vacancies

Councillor vacancies: 1 vacancy

6. Reports from County Councillor, Borough Councillors, PCSO & Community Warden

KCC Councillor S. Hudson gave a report on the current £42m shortfall in the Adult Social Care budget, mainly due to unpaid invoices for care received. Legal routes are being taken to reclaim the costs, which are still increasing as care still has to be provided.

Following a court case over the summer, it was determined that unaccompanied asylum seeker children must be treated the same as Kent children in care. There are currently 38 indigenous children in Kent and 777 children in care in Kent. The National Transfer Scheme means some Boroughs will take a share of the children, but are not providing a social worker, so when the children are transferred to their care a Kent social worker has to accompany them, causing a long backlog within the system in Kent.

KCC potholes budget is currently overspent by £8, the government has given £6m towards it but still a large shortfall to find.

Double yellow lines have been requested at the end of Church Lane for safety reasons and will be added to the EPPC HIP.

TMBC Councillor M. Boughton: TMBC currently has a £900k budget deficit, which is being addressed. The Community Warden Service Consultation response will be made tomorrow (Thursday) which will raise concerns over the shunting of the service costs from KCC to TMBC, for which there is no budget. Works to improve the junction and include a cycle lane along the A228 near Mereworth have been approved and are likely to start in Summer 2024, with delays in the surrounding areas during the works expected.

A formal consultation regarding double yellow lines along both sides of Branbridges road, from the kebab van up to the cul-de-sac in the corner will take place by the end of the year.

There has been a large increase in the demand for traffic wardens across the borough so recruitment will be increased.

7. To adjourn in order to enable members of the public to address the meeting

7.1 To receive correspondence from residents

52 Old Road has reported issues with the tree located on the verge outside their property. The roots are causing damage to their garden, interfering with the phone line cables and affecting the streetlight located next to it. It was resolved that the Clerk would report the issue to KCC who own the land / tree and follow up to ensure action is undertaken.

A resident has been experiencing issues with the school bus refusing to stop at the bus stop at the end of Hale Street near Brookside / the previous Harp pub. When they contacted the bus company, they were told that due to one complaint received from the residents living in the new houses (old Harp pub site) they no longer stop there, despite it being clearly listed on the bus timetable online. The resident was informed they should use the bus stop along Church Lane to ensure they do not miss the bus / are able to get off within the village. The Parish Clerk has contacted KCC regarding this, as using Church Lane would require an 11 year old child to cross Hale Street twice as there is no complete footpath along either side of Hale Street, mainly in the dark in the coming months and this was not a satisfactory response. Currently awaiting a response.

7.2 To take questions from residents

None posed

8. To receive a report from the Chairman / Clerk.

Nothing to report

9. Groups & Organisations: To receive reports from the Chairman of Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Groups that have met in the last 4 weeks

Assets: Councillor T. Eastwood gave an update on the following:

1 piece of the adult exercise equipment has been ordered and will be installed at the end of the month. The replacement mechanisms for the playground gates have arrived and will be installed in due course. A full inspection of the trees located at the playing fields has identified a number of trees that require work to ensure they remain safe, and a quote provided. to approve under Finance, Quotes)

The new Kitchen for the Jubilee Hall has arrived and refurbishment will commence tomorrow (Thursday 21st September)

The carpark resurfacing will start on Monday 24th October. A quote for the cost of speed bumps and carpark markings has been received (to approve under Finance, Quotes)

The Jubilee Hall public toilets proposal is ongoing.

Events: Councillor L. Browning gave an update on the following:

The Christmas Light Switch On will take place on Friday 1st December from 5.15pm. There has been 11-12 stalls signed up to the event, along with EPS choir, a BBQ, hot and cold drinks etc. SJM are kindly sponsoring the event for £3,000. The new lights installer has been confirmed and dates agreed for the lights installation.

Due to the rise in costs, Brookside will be unable to donate the village Christmas Tree this year. The

council would like to minute that they have always been very appreciative of the generosity of Brookside Garden Centre, and express their thanks for the trees previously donated. The cost of purchasing the tree will be covered by the sponsorship money this year. An example cost of a 15 foot tree delivered would be £450, so is not an insubstantial cost and the most sustainable options will be looked into.

The Halloween Walk will take place on Saturday 28th December, tickets £1 each. Volunteers are needed to help run the activities along the route – please let M. Joannes know if available to help.

Climate: No meeting has been held since the July meeting, but the recently adopted Anti-Sewage policy has been sent to the Secretary of State and MP Tom Tugendhat. A follow up letter will be sent to Southern Water in due course.

Allotments: Meeting taking place on Friday 22nd September

Youth and Community: Date TBC

10. Members who attended any meeting on behalf of EPPC not included elsewhere on the agenda will be invited to give a report.

Councillor D. Seal reported he had recently attended a seminar on electric charging stations on lampposts. Feedback has not been positive so far, concern over who covers the of the electricity used, that it is a slow-charge, and that if done overnight those using the charging point may not live in the house it is next to, so potentially causing parking issues, especially over a weekend.

Also attended a meeting regarding Flood Action Plan, EPPC appear to be the only council in 20 who actually have a plan in place.

11. Finance

11.1 To review and approve Bank Reconciliations and Accounts for July and August 2023.

Deferred due to unidentified reconciliation error affecting both months.

11.2 To review and approve Schedule of Upcoming Payments

KS Cleans	£725.00	
KS Cleans	£80.00	
Salaries	£3021.10	(October)
Engie	£205.31	
Veolia	£123.10	
Castle Water	£5	
Castle Water	£21.43	
Car park resurfacing	£25,000	(October)
Car park hedges	£1800	(October)
Kitchen fitting	£2497	
Grassland Services	£ variable due to the nature of the work	
Mark Edwards	£ variable due to the nature of the work	
Drax	£ variable due to usage	

Quotes listed below may also require payment if accepted.

11.3 To discuss and resolve received and proposed requests for grants and donations
Paddock Wood CAB - awaiting completed grant form
Poppy Appeal – it was resolved a donation will be made to The Poppy Appeal for the EPPC wreath that will be placed on Remembrance Sunday. Amount to be decided at October meeting.

11.4 To discuss and resolve quotes received

The following quotes have been received and it was resolved to accept them as detailed below:

Item	Detail	Cost	Accepted?
Carpark markings & humps	Arnold Clark – 6 disabled bays, yellow hatchings, 40 parking bays, 2 small humps 1 large hump	£2150 + vat £500 + vat £620 + vat	Yes Proposed: M. Barton 2 nd : M. Joannes All in Favour
Green Youth Shelter	Cost of moving it in 2022 Cost to move in 2023	£2215 £700	Just for informational purposed
Christmas Trees	15ft tree from Kent Christmas Trees	£450	Just for info
Tree works	The Tree Surgeon quote for required remedial works	£2,610	Yes Proposed: T. Eastwood 2 nd : M. Joannes All in Favour
DSE Desk assessments x 2 (legal requirement)	Option 1 Option 2 Option 3	£475 £395 £180	Option 3 approved Proposed: M. Barton 2 nd : R. Mewett All in Favour

It was also discussed about the need for new Parish Council noticeboards in the centre of the village and opposite the school. It was resolved that subject to approval of costs, design and any planning permission required, the current ones could be replaced. The Parish office will source quotes for suitable options and investigate potential planning application requirements.

11.5 To review and discuss Natwest Bank Account

M. Williams updated the council on the situation that arose with the council's bank account on Friday 8th September: Natwest has informed M. Williams that the money taken out of the account has now been returned and an investigation into how it was obtained is being undertaken. The account is currently frozen until the investigation is complete. The council expects a full explanation as to how this was able to occur given two signatories are required to action anything on the account, and only one fraudulent one was used to obtain the funds.

In response to this, a full review of all 3 council bank accounts, the authorised signatories and those with access has been reconfirmed with each bank.

12. Community Fridge

The council has received concerns from some residents regarding the hygiene and storage of items for the Community Fridge. Concern also raised over people queuing in the dark / rain through winter and was felt the current facility use was not fit for purpose as is. No insurance or risk assessment has been provided, and although it had been requested to add this initiative to the council's insurance policy, this is not possible unless the Council take full responsibility, which at this time it does not wish to do. It was resolved to speak to Councillor Hudson regarding finding an alternative venue for The Community Fridge to take place at going forward.

Proposed: M. Barton, **Seconded:** R. Mewett, **All in Favour**

13. Open Letter for Dog Owners

M. Williams had previously circulated a draft of an open letter to dog owners within the village regarding etiquette of dogs being on leads and owners picking up their dog mess. The focus is on looking at proactive measures to tackle the issues, such as forming an association / club for all owners in the village. Use as a forum to remind owners of etiquette and the need to take responsibility for their dogs. Will also encourage others to report those who fail to clear up after their dogs. Whilst enforcement of fines is not doable by EPPC, matters and proof can be passed to TMBC.

It was resolved to accept the letter and to post it on the council website / noticeboards /social media (with the link to the website)

Proposed: D. Seal, **Seconded:** T. Eastwood, **All in Favour**

14. Bye Laws

Councillor T. Eastwood has continued to review the Bye Laws that require updating and bringing up to current legislation. A vast amount of work is required to complete this and requires great attention to detail. T. Eastwood proposes he complete the required paperwork and will then disseminate for all to review and comment upon as needed.

15. Land Registry Deeds Online

The Assistant Clerk has requested clarification around the costs of looking up land registry deeds as a recent cost quote came back at £38. Upon discussion it was stated that when registering an account directly with the Land Registry, look ups cost £3 each, and that the £38 cost is likely to have been from a 3rd party company. Therefore look ups can be done as and when required.

16. Matters for discussion in private

17. Matters to be discussed and decided at the next meeting.

Any Planning Applications received since the monthly Planning and Transportation Meeting to be added to the Full Council Meeting agenda going forward to ensure they can be discussed within the 3 week response time.

Date and Time of next meeting: Wednesday 18th October at 7pm