
WESTERN AREA COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Meeting held in Upchurch Village Hall, The Street, Upchurch, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7EU on Tuesday, 1 March 2022 from 7.00 pm - 8.52 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Alan Horton, James Hunt, Richard Palmer, Paul Stephen, Sarah Stephen and Corrie Woodford (Vice-Chairman).

NOMINATED PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES: Parish Councillors Graham Addicott OBE (Hartlip PC), Nicola Butlin (Borden PC), Brian Clarke (Bredgar PC) and Vivien Rich (Tunstall PC).

OFFICERS PRESENT: Simon Algar, Janet Dart, Larissa Reed and Graeme Tuff.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Monique Bonney, Roger Clark and Nicholas Hampshire.

645 **EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE**

The Chairman read out the emergency evacuation procedures.

646 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mike Baldock disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as he sat on Borden Parish Council.

Councillor Alan Horton disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as he sat on Upchurch Parish Council.

Councillor James Hunt disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as a Trustee of Iwade at the Barn.

Councillor Richard Palmer disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as he sat on Newington Parish Council.

647 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 August 2021 (Minute Nos. 202 – 216) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendment:

Minute No. 212 the following to be added:

“That Members of the Committee noted and agreed under Item 12, Update on the Work Plan the proposed work plan for 2021/22, to include Bredgar and Hartlip Conservation Area Reviews.”

This was discussed further under Matters Arising from Previous Meetings where the Chairman proposed and Councillor Richard Palmer seconded that quotes be sought for Conservation Reviews to be carried out for Bredgar and Hartlip and be brought back to the June 2022 meeting for consideration.

648 MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Members noted the progress on actions.

The Conservation & Design Manager gave a presentation updating on the following:

- Rodmersham Church Street Conservation Area Assessment – there had been a good response to the public consultation. A recommendation to adopt Rodmersham Church Street would be considered at Cabinet in March 2022;
- Rodmersham Green Conservation Area Review – the proposed boundary changes were discussed. It was anticipated that the appraisal and management plan document would be adopted by the end of May 2022;
- Tunstall Conservation Area Review – the review would be considered by the Local Plan Panel in March 2022 and it was anticipated the appraisal and management plan document would be adopted by the end of May 2022.

The Chairman moved the following motion: That quotes be obtained for Conservation Area Reviews for Bredgar and Hartlip for consideration at the June 2022 meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer. On being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

With reference to the charging of electric vehicles at home where there was no driveway, Parish Councillor Graham Addicott advised he would provide the contact details of an expert in Brighton who could advise on this matter.

Parish Councillor Vivien Rich gave feedback about training on the Agricultural Bill. As this was a matter that could impact on planning, Parish Councillor Rich agreed to inform Members if suitable training was identified.

Councillor Richard Palmer advised that the Air Cadet Squadron would be moving to a new location.

Councillor Sarah Stephen advised that now the Active Travel Coordinator had started, he would commence the Walking and Cycling Project funded by the Western Area Committee in 2021/22 and set-up a working group.

With reference to Conservation issues including ponds, the Chairman suggested the Pond Warden be invited to the June 2022 Western Area Committee meeting.

Councillor Richard Palmer advised that a representative from the Kent County Council (KCC) Youth Service would be happy to attend the June 2022 meeting. It was suggested that the KCC Community Warden also be invited.

Resolved:

- 1) *That quotes be obtained for Conservation Area Reviews for Bredgar and Hartlip for consideration at the June 2022 meeting.*

649 PUBLIC FORUM

No issues were raised.

650 LOCAL ISSUES TO BE RAISED

Councillor Alan Horton spoke about a proposal councillors representing Rainham South, were seeking to progress with Medway Council and KCC regarding the prohibition of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV) on the A2. He said there would be an impact on Upchurch, Hartlip and Newington along with other areas. Councillor Horton moved the following motion: That the Chairman of the Western Area Committee write a letter to Medway Council and KCC highlighting the implications of implementing the proposal to prohibit HGVs on the A2. This was seconded by Councillor Richard Palmer. On being put to the vote the motion was agreed.

Councillor Sarah Stephen spoke about aging street signs that were difficult to read. She was advised to report the signs to Swale Borough Council (SBC) and they would be replaced. Member Grants could also be used to replace signs.

Councillor Paul Stephen suggested that the Western Area Committee considered providing funding to The Oaks Infant School to replace a structure in their woodland area, damaged by the recent storm, which allowed pupils to work outside under a covered area. Following a discussion, it was agreed that this was not something the Western Area Committee should be funding, and the school should contact the KCC Councillor for their area.

Councillor Sarah Stephen advised that she had secured funding from the Welcome Back Fund to install 7 new benches and 3 picnic tables at King George V Playing Fields.

Resolved:

- 1) *That the Chairman of the Western Area Committee write a letter to Medway Council and KCC, highlighting the implications of implementing the proposal to prohibit HGV's on the A2.*

651 ROSE HILL & MEADS WOODLAND MANAGEMENT & WORK PLANS

The Greenspaces Manager presented the Management and Work Plans for Rose Hill Woods and The Meads Community Woodland. He reminded Members that the Western Area Committee had allocated funding in 2020-21 for this work which had been carried out by an external consultant. He advised that there was £2,158 of funding remaining. The plans indicated if the tasks should be carried out by a contractor or a volunteer group. The Greenspaces Manager asked the Area Committee for a steer on how the remaining funds should be spent.

A discussion ensued and Members agreed that SBC seek volunteers to set up Friends Groups and to assist them in that process as well as helping them to report progress back to the Western Area Committee. The Friends Groups would need a constitution, terms of reference and a bank account. They would be able to apply for funds that were not available to SBC.

The Area Committee agreed that known potential volunteers be contacted by Members to see if they were interested in forming Friends Groups and report back to the June 2022 meeting. It was also agreed to adopt the Management and Work Plans for Rose Hill Woods and The Meads Community Woodland and the remaining funding to be split 50/50 between the two Friends Groups once established.

652 CLOSED CHURCHYARDS

The Chairman reminded Members that at the Western Area Committee Meeting on 31 August 2021, they were presented with a list of Closed Churchyards which set out lower priority improvement works within the Western Area. Improvements that were safety critical were funded by the SBC budget but there was not sufficient funding for lower priority works to be carried out.

The Chairman suggested that £10,000.00 of Western Area Committee funding for the year 2021/22 be allocated to bring forward lower priority improvement works and the paper in the agenda pack set-out a list of suggested works at Borden, Hartlip and Iwade.

Members discussed this proposal and some felt it was not appropriate for the Western Area Committee to fund this work. Others felt that by carrying out this work now, it would prevent further damage in the future. The Chief Executive confirmed that the Terms of Reference for the Area Committees stated that funding could be allocated to projects that were the responsibility of SBC, but local people wished to be prioritised.

653 UPDATE ON WORK PLAN - TO INCLUDE FUNDING ALLOCATIONS FOR 2021-22

The Chairman introduced the report. In the discussion that followed the Chairman moved the following motion: That the works to repair the flint wall at St Michael & All Angels, Hartlip be removed from the proposed allocations. This would reduce the proposed allocation to £9,516.00.

This left £30,484.00 to allocate to the external bids, details of which were included in the Agenda Pack. As the external bids totaled £31,390.50, the Chairman also proposed that the two largest bids, each for £10,000.00, both had their allocations reduced to £9,546.75.

Councillor Mike Baldock moved the following motion which was seconded by Councillor Alan Horton: That the following funding be allocated to each project:

- Iwade at the Barn, timber storage shed - £5,000.00;

- Newington History Group, design, print & install 3 lectern frame interpretation boards - £4,041.00;
- Borden Parish Council, fencing to boundary of nature reserve - £9,546.75;
- Newington Parish Council, provision of adult gym equipment at the recreation ground - £9,546.75;
- Upchurch Parish Council, installation of nature trail - £2,349.50; and
- Member proposal, closed churchyard works - £9,516.00.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed with one abstention by Councillor James Hunt.

Resolved:

- 1) That £40,000.00 funding be awarded to projects in the following proportions:**
- a) Iwade at the Barn, timber storage shed - £5,000.00;**
 - b) Newington History Group, design, print & install 3 lectern frame interpretation boards - £4,041.00;**
 - c) Borden Parish Council, fencing to boundary of nature reserve - £9,546.75;**
 - d) Newington Parish Council, provision of adult gym equipment at the recreation ground - £9,546.75;**
 - e) Upchurch Parish Council, installation of nature trail - £2,349.50; and**
 - f) Member proposal, closed churchyard works - £9,516.00.**

654 MATTERS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE BY CABINET

No issues were raised.

655 MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY COMMITTEE

No issues were raised.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel