

DARENTH PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Council Meeting
held on Wednesday 11 December 2024
Jubilee Hall, Waller Park Pavilion, Wood Lane, Darenth, Kent DA2 7LR

Councillor's Present: T Hicks, K Holmes, S Holmes, T Prentice, D Risely and K Webb.

In Attendance: E Mote, Parish Clerk & Responsible Finance Officer

Visitors: One member of the public

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the protocol regarding the audio and visual recording of proceedings.

87/12/24: TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors I Armitt, G Manuel and N Weavis (Chairman). In the absence of the Chairman, the Parish Vice Chairman, Councillor S Holmes, assumed the position of Chairman.

The Chairman proposed a Minute's Silence for long-standing former Councillor Bill Cook who sadly passed away on 8 December 2024.

88/12/24: TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY OR PREJUDICIAL INTEREST

None received.

89/12/24: TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 NOVEMBER 2024

RESOLVED: To approve the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 20 November 2024.

90/12/24: ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

There were no items for Member consideration.

91/12/24: TO RECEIVE EXTERNAL REPORTS

(a) Borough Councillor Report

Borough Councillor P Denman was unable to attend the meeting.

(b) Update from Darenth Woods Working Group

Councillor Webb confirmed that a meeting had taken place on 14 October 2024 to set priorities for the Working Group. The main issues regarding antisocial behaviour of vehicles using Darenth Woods fell into categories of out of area usage and that of local inconsiderate conduct. It was suggested that increased Police/security footfall could be put in place on Sundays, when disruption appeared to be at a peak. Borough Councillor Denman would investigate the possibility of information posters around relevant sites and the Group would explore potential funding options and confirm Terms of Reference for the Working Group.

(c) Darent River Preservation Society Update

Councillor Hicks, the DRiPS representative, informed Members that he had attended the Annual General Meeting on 28 November 2024. It was reported that extraction plants at Horton Kirby and Eynsford would be closed, along with various underwater plant facilities in the local area.

RESOLVED: To note reports as presented.

92/12/24: TO FORMALLY RATIFY THE CO-OPTION OF COUNCILLOR G MANUEL

Following the Councillor vacancy in Lane End Ward, Members were requested to fill the position as requirements to hold a by-election had not been met. Councillor G Manuel was selected for co-option by majority decision at the Parish Council meeting held on 20 November 2024 and Members were asked to formally ratify the co-option of the new member.

RESOLVED: To formally note the co-option of Councillor G Manuel on 20 November 2024.

93/11/24: TO CONSIDER INSTALLATION OF AN ADDITIONAL WASTE BIN AT GREENLANDS SCHOOL

Following reports from Borough Councillor Denman of considerable amounts of waste being left on Parish land outside Greenlands Primary School, Members were asked to consider options to rectify the issue. Greenlands Primary School had been contacted with a view to initiating a collaborative approach to the problem and the Parish Council asked if litter-picking by staff and/or pupils was an option, or if the School could write to parents asking for their co-operation in the matter. The Parish Council had not, at the time of the meeting, had a response regarding this.

Dartford Borough Council had confirmed to the Clerk that waste was collected three times per week and there was no current scope to increase frequency. It was also confirmed by the Waste and Recycling Team that any receptacle installed would have waste collected by the Borough Council at no extra charge to the Parish. Members considered the addition of a second waste bin, and it was discovered that the Parish Council could utilise a litter bin currently stored at Waller Park. Members agreed to install the bin, and further consideration would be given to its position on Council land outside Greenlands School.

RESOLVED: To install additional waste bin outside Greenlands Primary School to resolve overflowing waste issues and liaise with Dartford Borough Council's Waste and Recycling Team regarding litter collection.

94/12/24: TO NOTE PORTABLE APPLIANCE TESTING TO COUNCIL FACILITIES

Members were asked to note Electrical Portable Appliance Testing (PAT), carried out to all relevant equipment at Waller Park and Darenth Hall facilities on 15 November 2024 by A Osborne Electrical Ltd, for compliancy purposes.

RESOLVED: To note the Electrical Portable Appliance Testing Reports carried out by A Osborne Electrical Ltd on 15 November 2024 at Waller Park and Darenth Hall facilities.

95/12/24: FINANCE

(a) To set a Precept of £88,641.00 for the financial year 2025-26

Members considered setting a Precept of £88,641 for the financial year 2025-26. This amount represented an increase of 7% and equated to £69.14 for properties within Council Tax Band D. Councillors also noted confirmation of the Precept Base of £1,282 and Government of Support Grant of £1,923.

RESOLVED: That a Precept of £88,641.00 be set for the financial year 2025-26.

(b) To consider and resolve removal and replacement Bank Signatories

Changes to the Local Government Act 1972 under The Legislative Reform (Payments by Parish Councils, Community Councils and Charter Trustees) Order 2014, resulted in this Order removing the requirement for every cheque or other order for the payment of money by a parish or community council to be signed by two members of the council. The Order was made under the provisions of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 (c.51) and removes a burden on parish and community councils and facilitates the use of electronic means of payment.

However, under s8.1 of the Council's Financial Regulations, it is stated that cheques or orders for payment in accordance with a resolution or delegated decision shall be signed by a signatory. It was therefore recommended that, following her recent retirement, former Councillor Gutteridge be removed from the list and a replacement signatory for the Parish Council be appointed.

Members discussed options for a new signatory, and it was considered most appropriate that Vice Chairman and Lead Member for Finance, Councillor S Holmes, be confirmed as the new co-signer. The Clerk would initiate the process with Parish bankers, NatWest Bank Plc.

RESOLVED: That former Councillor Gutteridge be removed from the list of signatories and replaced by Councillor S Holmes, with the Clerk acting upon the decision made.

- (c) **To note Cambridge and Counties interest rate reduction**
- (d) **To agree Monthly Bank Analysis as for 30 November 2024**
- (e) **To note Monthly Budget Analysis for 30 November 2024**

RESOLVED: To agree and note financial items as presented.

96/12/24: PLANNING

- (a) **To consider new applications**

DA/24/01257/FUL – 59 Watchgate Darenth Kent DA2 7JY

Alteration of front garden to level to create driveway and vehicle crossing onto Watchgate.

Observations: Members noted the application.

- (b) **To note recent decisions and appeals**

DA/24/01192/FUL - 2 Court Road Darenth Kent DA2 7JJ

Erection of a two-storey side and rear extension.

Decision: PERMISSION GRANTED

- (c) **To consider new applications/recent decisions received after agenda publication**

No new applications or recent decisions were received after agenda publication.

97/12/24: EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC

To consider the **exclusion** of the **press and public** for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, Section 1(2).

98/12/24: TO CONSIDER RENEWAL OF GREENS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR GREEN STREET GREEN ROAD FROM 1 APRIL 2025

Members considered the quote from Omega Tree Care Ltd to be the best option available. Members agreed the quote in principle with the Clerk being asked to clarify some further details of the proposal before awarding the contract at the January 2025 Meeting of the Council.

RESOLVED: To agree proposal from Omega Tree Care Ltd in principle with ratification taking place at the January 2025 Meeting of the Council.

99/12/24: DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date for the next Meeting of the Council was confirmed as Wednesday 15 January 2025.

There being no further business, the Chairman closed the meeting at 20:12.