

1. Venue Alkham Village Hall, 7:30pm
2. Present Parish Councillors: Neil Burrows, Den Barnard, Susan Lees, Fiona MacAskill, Anthony Barrier, Geoff Hillier and Peter Smith. Clerk: Angela Miller. Parishioners: 8 District Councillors: Pauline Beresford and Nick Dixon.
3. Apologies None
4. Regular Business
  - 4.1 The minutes from meetings held 4<sup>th</sup> January 2016 and 8<sup>th</sup> February 2016 were received, approved and signed as correct records.
5. Matters Arising
  - 5.1 Co-option of new Parish Councillor – Chairman Neil Burrows introduced the new Parish Councillor Peter Smith and welcomed him to the Parish Council.
  - 5.2 Councillor Den Barnard, Flood Warden, gave an update to all regarding the anticipated works for the bridges at Valley Cottages. The official start date for this is 21<sup>st</sup> March, however a Highways team advised Den that it may begin mid March. The drain and pipes opposite Wolverton Cottages have now been cleared. He said that the two outstanding items are 1) work on the Meggett Lane culvert will have to wait until the water stops flowing before this can be done, and 2) a blocked drain outside Mr Scherer's vineyard is still on the list for clearing.

Den said a lot was learnt from the floods in January and in general it was evident that there is not enough time to get sandbags etc organised once the water is flowing so fast. He would like to formulate a contingency plan and response group so that people can be deployed to the sites most at risk to help deal with the problems of flooding. He went on to mention a situation in Ewell Minnis when after Highways had attended the scene, the sandbags were stolen over night. It is very difficult to manage situations but feels a lot has been learnt from the last occasion.

New style sandbags are now available, these are called 'quick sandbags' which are stored flat. Once placed in water they expand and are as effective, if not more, than regular sandbags. We shall enquire with DDC about the possibility of acquiring some of these, as they require much less storage space for homes at risk.
  - 5.3 BT - Dr Mead had sent the Parish Council a BBC news article about how under Ofcom rules BT can't take out a phone unless there's another one within 400m. The article explains that if there isn't a payphone within 400m, then BT have to consult with the council. If they object to the plans to remove, then the payphone stays. The Parish Council will bring this article to the attention of BT Payphones and ask if this applies to the kiosk at Ewell Minnis. If this is the case, it may not be necessary for the Parish Council to sponsor the box at a cost of £360 per annum.

Councillor Barrier reported that the kiosk at Ewell Minnis is currently in working order, with no broken glass or faulty door.
  - 5.4 There have been a few suggestions for a Guest Speaker at next month's Annual Parish Meeting, those including KALC, Elham Vineyard, The Medway Queen Paddle Steamer, Archaeologist's, Natural England and The Port of Dover. After some discussion it was agreed that we should invite The Port of Dover to come and present the changing face of Dover. This is a topic that is likely to interest many parishioners. Angela will enquire as necessary and arrange for an article in the newsletter if this is confirmed.

- 5.5 Parish Council website – this is still currently being constructed (few teething problems!) and Angela is in regular contact with Geoff Wells for progress updates. Cllr Hillier asked whether we should all be trained to know how to build websites. KALC have offered training sessions with . As KCC are already underway with the construction of our website

## 6. Correspondence

- 6.1 Action Fraud : Remember that you can contact them on the site/number below: [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk) Telephone. 0300 123 2024. Other internet sites are useful to research numbers calling you - such as "Whose number is this?" and "Who called me?". The telephone preference service is worth registering for to reduce the number of cold calls.
- 6.2 Highways England – The current road works at Folkestone end of the Alkham Valley are to install new underground cables for the streetlights. Work is anticipated to take until the end of March but there will not be any works or disruption to traffic over the Easter weekend.
- 6.3 DDC - Council Tax levels for 2016/17 were confirmed on 2 March. DDC has confirmed that the average total Council Tax bill for 2016/17 for a Band D property in the area will be £1,592, an increase of £55.44 or 3.61% on the 2015/16.
- 6.4 DDC - Snow Warden Scheme (co-ordinated by DDC) to help to ensure a more consistent delivery of services, by volunteers, that can keep key local access routes clear in the event of any significant snowfall in the region. The scheme would also ensure that training and advice is made available to those wishing to participate in the scheme. Alkham would like to register as an active partner in the scheme so Angela will email DDC accordingly.
- 6.5 An online petition to Government for Parish Councils to have the right to appeal planning decisions was sent to all councillors prior to the meeting. Although it was felt that the right to appeal may not affect Alkham much (only in very exceptional circumstances), anyone can be included in the petition online if interested.

## 7. Planning -

- 7.1 **DOV16/00122 Meggett Farm Cottage, Hogbrook Hill Lane, Alkham** – Erection of a detached double garage. The Parish Council had no objections.

Outcome of previous planning applications / queries: -

- 7.2 **DOV 15/01201 Cluaran, Alkham Valley Road, Alkham** – Permission granted for a roof extension incorporating three front dormers and one rear dormer, and erection of a single storey front extension and side extension (existing garage to be demolished).

## 8. Delegates Reports & PACT

- 8.1 District Councillor Nick Dixon updated everyone that there is no money available to install overhead gantries on the A20. Highways England refuse to remove the 40mph limit despite challenges from local Councillors. MP's from Dover and Folkestone are meeting with the Traffic Minister next week. Cllr Dixon explained that the roundabouts along Snargate Street/Townwall Street are now being demolished. This is to make way for a sequence of new traffic lights to control the flow of lorries towards the port, and is scheduled for completion at the end of 2016.

- 8.2 District Councillor Pauline Beresford reported that the archaeology survey has been completed at the DTIZ. The cinema and the hotel are due to be marked out and hopefully building will commence in the summer. She warned everyone that another Facist / Anti-Facist protest is due to be held in the centre of Dover on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and she advised people to avoid the town on that day if possible.

The railway line between Dover and Folkestone is still under repair. There is approx 250m of track due to be replaced and repaired and in the meantime the bus service continues to run between the stations. Cllr Beresford reported that a lot of work has been done already but realistically this will continue until the end of the year. There are no longer any taxi's waiting at Dover Priory.

Parish Councillor Geoff Hillier reminded the Council that according to The Good Councillors Guide, late items should not be added to an agenda. The deadline date is 3 days before the meeting and matters received after this date should be deferred to the following meeting. Cllr MacAskill suggested it could be a good idea if we are flexible with this as sometimes we may be able to include an item rather than wait for the next bi-monthly meeting. Cllr Burrows is aware of the principle behind the 3 day deadline but is still keen to be able to consider late items and if the matter is regarded as important by the Parish Council they can request for this to be included in the next meeting instead.

9. Interval Mrs Holliman advised the Parish Council that her property has suffered £10,000 damage as a result of water flowing off the fields and road during the time of the flood. The receptor tanks in her garden do not take the volume of water properly and Highways do not visit the site to maintain them adequately. Cllr Burrows and Cllr Barnard will visit Hopton Manor and approach Kevin Gore at KCC again about what can be done.

10. Finances The Parish Council resolved to pay the following:-

- 10.1 Clerks salary and expenses for January & February 2016 of £416.07
- 10.2 Invoice from Alkham Village Hall for hire costs 2016–2016 of £105.62
- 10.3 Invoice from BT Payphones for sponsorship of kiosk (Jan '16-Jan'17) of £360.00
- 10.4 Invoice from Harmer Landscapes for £57.60 for Hogbrook Hill Lane hedge cutting.
- 10.5 Harmer Landscapes – new prices for 2016 season
- 10.6 VAT reimbursement received of £694.59 (up to 31/12/15)

11. Any other business

- 11.1 A silver Ford Focus, Y204UKL is suspected to be involved in the theft of dogs. The vehicle was seen in the area of Long Lane in Shepherdswell on 1 March 2016. After a short pursuit it was lost heading towards Wingham. Any sightings to PC Harry Callaghan please.
- 11.2 The Dover district recorded the highest level of housebuilding starts and completions across East Kent in 2015 as Dover District Council's plans to improve the range and quality of housing starts to deliver new homes.
- 11.3 Now is the time to think about renewing or signing up for garden waste collections from Dover District Council.

12. The date of the next regular meeting is the Annual Parish Meeting on Monday 4th April 2016