

SUTTON BY DOVER PARISH COUNCIL

<http://suttonbydoverparishcouncil.org.uk/>

**ANNUAL PARISH MEETING**

Minutes

Meeting was held in Studdal Church Hall on Tuesday 23rd May 2024 at 7.30 pm.

**1. Present and Apologies**

Present:

B Merriman (Chair)

H Densham

D Willet

D Vickers

KCC Member Steve Manion

4 Members of the public

A Nigol (Clerk)

Apologies:

R Buxton

DDC Member Nick Kenton

John Foche Chaity representative Ronnie Harrop

**2. To note the minutes of the APM meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2023**

Noted for accuracy. All agreed.

**3. Declarations of interest**

None.

**4. Matters arising from previous APM minutes**

None.

**5. Chair's report**

Attached.

**6. Reports from representatives of local organisations**

**Report from Community Centre:**

Good evening, for anybody that does not know me I'm Claire. I am a Trustee and the Treasurer for the Community Centre.

Just a brief bit of background information, the Community Centre was opened in 1983 – on land that was donated by a local resident, after 3 decades of fund raising. It is Governed by a Trust Document and the Trust is run on a day to day basis by Volunteer Trustees from our community.

The Community Centre is run on a non-profit making basis, and to this end we have strived to keep our hiring costs as low as possible. Currently £5.00 per hour plus the cost of any electricity used.

Over the last year the Trustees have continued to run regular well attended, Bingo and Quiz nights with many members of the local community supporting these events helping to boost our funds, which are used for the general maintenance and upkeep of the Centre.

In 2023 we applied for and were successful in receiving a DDC Community Grant, which we used to install 3 New hygienic hot air hand driers plus a Baby changing unit.

Over the past year have many regular weekly bookings, such as Mid Life Movers, Tia Chi, Karata, the Garden Club, and Skally Wags for dog training, and the Refillable Van.

Our big event last year was celebrating the Kings Coronation, with over 120 members of the community sitting down for an afternoon tea. We are and were grateful for once again receiving a members grant from Councillor Stev Manion and also a donation from the Parish Council. Which enabled us to put this event on at no cost to the participants. There was fun and games for the children followed by a wonderful afternoon tea, culminating in a glass of bubbly and a toast to our newly crowned King Charles.

So I would like to conclude by thanking each and every one of our Trustee volunteers, for giving so freely of their time over the past year, to Councillor Stev Manion and Dover District Council for their continued support, in helping us to maintain and make our Community Centre a hub of village life.

Thank you.

*Report was presented by Claire Inglin (Trustee and the Treasurer for the Community Centre)*

#### **Report from Sutton Church and Hall:**

Thank you for this opportunity to share the work of the church operating here at Studdal, Ashley and Sutton. I am pleased to report that, despite attempts to undermine her work during the confusing covid period, the church continues to serve the Parish. We are still able to provide the spiritual encouragement that people would expect. There is a Eucharist service every month at St. Peter & St. Paul's, we are extremely fortunate that our Rector, Seth Cooper, finds the time in his extremely

busy schedule to lead us most months. There are also 2, less formal, monthly services in this building; Messy Church and Studdal @ 11. Attendance at all three services has increased during the last year, which is a wonderful encouragement to the few who work to make them happen. Most of you will also be aware that we provide special celebratory services, mostly all-age, throughout the year: Mothering Sunday, Easter, Harvest, Remembrance Sunday, and the Christmas Carols by Candlelight. We are grateful to the small band of extra helpers who have supported this event by decorating the church so beautifully, which I know is much appreciated by all those who attend. The ever-popular Christingle also continues on Christmas Eve here in East Studdal. Along with the regular, expected services, there are still occasional weddings, baptisms and funerals in the Parish Church, and occasional social events here in the Church Hall.

Obviously, the Church isn't just about services, we are here to take the encouragement, peace, and love of the Gospel to our community, offering support to any we know who are in need, in their own homes and, sometimes, in hospital. If you think that someone in the Parish would appreciate a visit, please always feel free to pass on their names to me, whatever their situation. We can offer home communion, a time to pray with them, or just offer a chat and share experiences. Most of the visits, if I'm being honest, include cake at some point or other!! Last, but certainly not least; the regular coffee mornings still provides a safe space for people of the Parish to come together and build relationship with their neighbours. We hope to offer an atmosphere of friendship that encourages mutual support, as well as the opportunity to eat home-made cakes!

*Report was presented by Ann Ford ALM (authorised lay minister)*

#### **Report from John Foche Charity:**

Due to unforeseen personal circumstances, unfortunately there was no-one available to give a report on the activities of the charity for 2023-2024. The Chair of the Parish Council gave a brief background to the charity's works and was able to confirm that Christmas hampers were distributed to eligible member of the Parish in December 2023 along with a very successful Christmas lunch held in the Parish Community Centre which was much enjoyed by all who attended.

#### **7. Questions/Comments from local residents**

None.

#### **8. DDC and KCC reports**

No reports.

#### **9. Any other business**

Cllr Densham requested to record the lack of attendance by the local residents.

KCC Member Steve Manion arrived.

#### **10. Next Monthly Parish Council Meeting:**

Tuesday 4th June 2024 at 7.30pm in Studdal Church Hall, Downs Road

Meeting finished at: 20:15

Cllr Merriman thanked everyone for coming along to the meeting and invited them to help themselves to the refreshments. The Parish Council has taken up an opportunity to acquire a portrait of the King, which they handed to the Community Centre for public display.

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING MAY 2024**

### **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2024 COVERING THE PERIOD APRIL 2023 – MARCH 2024**

Good evening, everyone and welcome to the Sutton by Dover Annual Parish meeting. This is the Chairman's Report covering the period April 23-March 24.

The Parish Year began with the Annual Parish Litter Pick in April. The day started with awful weather, just pouring with rain. Nonetheless there was a good turnout of volunteers who managed to litter pick nearly every road in the Parish. By early afternoon there was a trailer full of rubbish on its way to the Refuse and Recycling Depot. Thanks go to everyone who took part. I should also mention here members of the Parish who arming themselves with black sacks, pick up sticks and gloves and litter pick as a habit whilst taking their constitutional walk around the lanes.

There have been a number of changes on the Parish Council during the year. Cllr Graeme Akhurst did not stand for re-election in May after many years serving on the Parish Council and supporting me as Vice Chairman, his knowledge and expertise is greatly missed. Cllr Angie Calthorpe resigned in the summer, Angie and her husband are now taking every opportunity to travel the UK and Europe in their camper van. Angie's input as a Councillor is much missed, not to mention the delicious refreshments! We were fortunate to welcome Doug Vickers as a new Councillor and he will take specific responsibility for the allotments and community orchard. Since then it has been nigh on impossible to recruit any new councillors, which leaves us very vulnerable as there must be three councillors present at any meeting for it to be quorate. If anyone knows of any community minded person who would like to get involved in the running of the Parish, then please get them to contact Ahti Nigol, Parish Clerk. Despite these changes and a depleted Parish Council, we have continued to work hard to address the business of the Parish and to reflect on its needs.

There continued to be a number of planning applications dealt with by the PC during the year and most of these were for extensions and additions to existing properties. The Parish Council endeavour always to consult with neighbours on planning issues that may affect them and after discussion at the monthly Parish Council Meeting provide Dover District Council with recommendations in the Parish's best interest.

New building works continue on the former Nursery Site in Downs Road and Homestead Lane. The construction site at the former nursery seems to be dragging on and has caused a lot of disruption to neighbours. It is understood the completion date for this development is December 2024. The Parish Council are currently gathering information

from Parishioners regarding additional play/sports equipment for the playing field to be financed by a Section 106 grant related to this development.

In June the Annual Governance and Accountability Returns were submitted to the Smaller Authorities External Audit Team and I am pleased to say there were no issues raised by them.

In July the Appeal for the development of an airfield and ancillary elements was dismissed by Dover District Council. Again, thanks must go to the local protest group 'Chocksgoaway' for fighting this Appeal.

Also, in July the annual ROSPA inspection of equipment and facilities in the playing fields took place, The main issue highlighted was the crumbling BMX track concrete, Councillor Willett and a member of the Parish have offer to undertake repairs to this area.

Despite some of the Community Orchard being reclaimed for allotments where plum and pear trees were failing, we still have a thriving apple orchard. A successful Apple Day took place on a beautiful sunny morning in September. Member of the Parish came to pick and press apples and have a chat over coffee and biscuits. The bonus being they took home ready pressed apple juice and fresh apples. Thanks to all those who helped on that ay. Two members of the Parish kindly undertook essential pruning in the Orchard in January so we hope for a bumper crop this autumn.

Allotments continue to be in demand and due to opening up new allotments in 2023 and allotment holders 'retiring' there is currently an allotment vacancy should anyone be interested, please contact the Parish Clerk. Unfortunately, the grant applied for from the Amity Allotment Fund to provide permanent water supply, hedge and tree maintenances and repair to the entrance gates was unsuccessful and the Parish Council are in the process of reapplying.

Potholes are a continuing problem in the Parish, not only in the road itself, but where the edge of the road is breaking away. The Parish Clerk reports these to KCC when he is informed of a problem, but Parishioners are able to report such problems themselves direct to KCC via their website which is easy to use. The breaking up of the edges of our ancient lanes seems to be caused by the increased traffic load using the lanes due to expanding development and also the fact that Parishioners are not keeping their hedges trimmed back to within their boundaries resulting in drivers unable to drive down the middle of roads, veering over to miss overhanging shrubbery and gradually breaking up the end of the road surface.

The other bane of our lives is issues with our drains, which continually get blocked by mud and debris and soakaways that overflow resulting in flooding. There has been a particular problem this year with two development sites having deliveries from large vehicles who drive over verges resulting in the mud blocking drains.

Following the 'loss' of the application forms to formerly adopt the piece of land known as Three Horseshoes Green as a 'Village Green' it was agreed to reapply to KCC and the process is currently taking place.

The PC continue to respond and investigate issues raised by Parishioners. Unfortunately, dog fouling continues to be a problem both in the playing fields and along footpaths. Notices have been posted requesting Parishioners be mindful that it is an offence not to pick up after their dogs. Another on going issues for the Parish is poor or non-existent broadband availability. The Parish Council are endeavouring to do all they can to address this problem.

In December and January, the Council discussed the budget for the forthcoming year. Due to rising costs, especially in the grass cutting contract and maintenance works in the playing fields and the allotment/orchard areas, it was necessary to increase the amount of money we requested from DDC to run the Parish and this resulted in a small increase on Parishioners Annual Council Tax.

The Parish Council continue to strive to obtain best value on contracts and one off maintenance works. Other spends this year have included replacement of batteries and pads on the defibrillator.

The 2023/24 accounts are currently being reviewed by the internal auditor and the audited accounts together with the Annual Report will be presented at the June PC meeting for approval.

To conclude on behalf of the Parish Council I would like to thank the following people:

Councillor Steve Manion, DDC and KCC. Steve is always at our meetings, shows a great interest in the Parish and has helped with advice and funding for which we are grateful.

Councillor Nick Kenton DDC. We are grateful to Nick for keeping us informed as to matters affecting our Parish.

Claire Inglin for acting as our internal auditor.

Ahti Nigol our Parish Clerk whose hard work is invaluable to the smooth running of the Parish Council.

Finally, I would very much like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support to me and their continued commitment to this community.

Thank You