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| Minutes of the meeting of the Riverhead Parish Council held remotely at 19.30 hours on Monday, 16th November 2020. |
| **1. PRESENT:**Mrs Collins (Chairman), Mr Himsworth (Vice Chairman), Mr Colnet, Mrs Stewart, Mrs Hooper and Mr Smith.Apologies accepted: Mrs KennettAlso present: Cllr Bayley – SDC, Mr Freedman and Mrs Penollar (Clerk) |
| **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:*** Cllr Colnet declared an interest in an invoice in item 7.a.
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| 3. MINUTES:The minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 19th October 2020 have previously been circulated and were approved and signed.  |
| 4. Reports from District/County Councillors* 3,000 postcards giving advice have been distributed to vulnerable residents.
* Cllr Brown will be speaking against a Riverhead planning application at the next SDC Development Committee meeting.
* Sevenoaks District Council is considering the next steps for its Local Plan after an unsuccessful Judicial Review.
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| **5. MATTERS FOR REPORT****a. Action points outstanding since previous meeting*** Amherst Hill bus shelter to be re-felted
* Stone pier at Alison’s Garden to be re-fixed
* Fountain refurbishment
* Parkland bird boxes
* Testing accessibility for new website - not due until end of 2020
* Discussion with Tesco re barrier baskets on Aisher Way once new tiers look their best

**b. Highways*** Cllr Stewart will attend the virtual Kent Highways Annual Parish Forum next week.

**Street lights*** Nothing to report

**Footpaths and pavements*** Kent Highways believe the landowner has taken enough action to make the loose brickwork at The Heights safe for the time being, even after it was reported that the movement of the trees in the wind is exerting pressure on the wall.
* The Clerk will meet with a local volunteer resident after the lockdown about a particular issue on Shoreham Lane. Councillors were asked to find some voluntary work at the allotments or the Parkland that he can carry out safely as a single volunteer on behalf of the Parish Council.

**Street furniture** * Cllr Colnet was thanked for removing the planter that had been knocked over on White Hart Parade. It has not been damaged and can be re-fitted.
* The regular electrician who puts up most of the Christmas lights has confirmed that he is permitted to work in the current lockdown and that he strongly prefers to put the lights up shortly before lockdown finishes as it is safer to do so whilst most the shops are still closed. Cllr Kennett will arrange for the other lights to be put up as soon as lock down finishes.
* Cllr Himsworth offered to check the proximity of the dog bins to other waste bins as dog waste is no longer being treated separately by SDC who empty both types of bin.
* Cllr Kennett met with the Kent Highways engineer and he has agreed to approve a slightly shorter length of railing than requested to the proposed new railings along The Square at the bottom of Chipstead Lane. He has concerns about the bollard located at a narrow part of the pavement and it will be removed if there is a complaint. Kent Highways will supply photos of the proposed railings and obtain a quote.
* The phone box will be used by St Mary’s Church to promote a virtual Christmas Tree Festival. The Council’s Christmas tree will be decorated using photos of the Council members wearing festive accessories and a face masks as decorations to advertise that Council is still working. Cllr Hooper offered to co-ordinate.

**Traffic and local parking*** Speedwatch has had to be deferred until after the current lockdown.
* Cllr Kennett attended a 2nd remote meeting with Highways England and other local councils. Highways England have taken on board concerns about the A25/A224 always being the route for diversions and agreed that for all future planned M25 closures, the diversion route will be inside the M25. It cannot guarantee that the A25/A224 route will not be used in emergency situations or that drivers will follow the diversion signs rather than their satnavs
* Cllr Kennett and a couple of concerned residents will meet with Cllr Nick Chard, KCC on Wednesday discuss the parking issues on Worships Hill.

**Local business and services*** The theme for Christmas windows display this year is Christmas trees and Mrs Mercer has been invited to judge the displays in December.
* During the last month, there has a been a vehicle break in and then a week later pink paint was thrown over 3 cars on Long Meadow.

**c. Village Hall*** The following weekly and monthly checks were carried out:
* Hall emergency lighting
* The warning beeper on the fire alarm system was tested and found to sound.
* The alarm in the disabled toilet was functioning.
* First aid box was checked.
* The fire exit is clear.
* The defibrillator battery was “OK” and heated box is in working order.
* A visual inspection of all fire extinguishers has also been carried out this month.
* Apart from the Pre-school, all regular hirers have had to stop using the Village Hall and the one hirer who paid in advance has been refunded the fees. It was agreed all hirers are permitted to pay in arrears during the continuing pandemic to reduce the work for the Clerk.
* With the current lockdown putting a halt to a physical Remembrance Sunday service, thanks go to the church for arranging the virtual one. Cllr Stewart offered to remove all the memorial posters by the war memorial at the end of November.
* The planning application for the solar panels has been submitted and the decision is likely to be known on 23rd December. Cllr Himsworth was thanked for obtaining another successful grant application. Ibstock Enovert Trust have offered a £3,000 grant and it is proposed the balance of £1,536.05 is funded from the Village Hall earmarked reserves. This will mean both the cost and savings of the solar panels can be matched as the reserves can be re-built in future years. All Councillors were asked to think about this proposal and raise any concerns with the Clerk. The Finance Committee will meet on 30th November to discuss and make a formal proposal to full Council for decision at the December Council meeting.
* The annual service of the fire equipment has been carried out.
* Remaining repairs after the break in will be carried out next week.
* Cllr Colnet has ordered a Christmas tree and will collect it and install it.

**d. Parkland*** The November Parkland working party had to be cancelled in the lock down.
* The delay in completing the English weave fencing planned near the St Mary’s Drive entrance is due to the availability of supplies. The work is expected to be completed before Christmas.
* One of the regular working party volunteers from St Mary’s Drive has offered to take over the regular mowing of paths. Cllr Himsworth agreed to find a suitable thank you gift for Mr Ward who has done this voluntary work for several years.
* The pumpkin trail was very popular and much enjoyed. A donation to be used towards the Parkland costs is being made to the Parish Council and it was suggested a sign post to the Parkland could be funded using the donation. Cllr Stewart offered to investigate the cost.
* Cllr Himsworth has arranged a tree survey to be carried out in the Parkland.

**e. Allotments & Open Spaces*** All allotment plots are fully let. There are still a few existing plot holders that need to settle their annual rent and return the new contracts. There is a waiting list if any allotmenteers give up plots.
* Minor tree work is being carried out at both allotment sites over the winter as well as work to remove branches from an allotment tree over hanging River Court. The rest of the work identified will be carried out next year.
* The Land Registry compliant lease for the Scout site has been updated by the Solicitor to incorporate amendments requested by the Scout HQ solicitors and will be sent to the local Scout Group once the Communication Sub-committee have reviewed it.

**f. Communications*** No breaches in GDPR were reported.
* The Clerk is in the process of changing to Microsoft Business 365.
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| **6. MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE COUNCIL**1. **Notified item:** Motion to co-opt Mr David Freedman to member of Riverhead Parish Council *Rule 8(3) of The Local Elections (Parishes & Communities) Rules 1986*
* Mr Freedman introduced himself and summarised his past achievements when he served on the Council a few years ago.

**It was moved to co-opt Mr David Freedman to member of Riverhead Parish Council*** The Clerk reminded Cllr Freedman that she would need to witness him sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office once it was permitted to meet.
1. **Notified item:** Motion to contribute to the cost of working from home for the Parish Clerk during the Coronavirus pandemic by way of an allowance of £3.60 per week. *Clerks contract section 10.2*
* HMRC have permitted an allowance of £6.00 per week to reimburse employees that are required to work from home, without the need to supply individual invoices. The review of costs carried out by members of the Finance Committee was explained and found 3/5th of the allowance for the Clerk’s 3 working days was reasonable. At £3.60 per week, the claim for the allowance is likely to cost about £100 for the year and it is expected to be fully offset by the reduction in utility costs for using the office.

**It was moved that Riverhead Parish Council contribute to the cost of working from home for the Parish Clerk during the Coronavirus pandemic by way of an allowance of £3.60 per week.** |
| **7. FINANCE****a. Review and approve invoices for payment*** The list of payments distributed for approval totals £3,434.80. Invoices already settled can be identified by the date beside them. Cllr Collins confirmed she had seen all the invoices along with either Cllr Kennett or Cllr Himsworth. Payments of over £500 to a supplier include £688.09 to Streetlights for the quarterly charge on the street light maintenance contract. It was agreed to settled the regular invoice due for the photocopier contract when it arrives. The invoices were approved for payment.

**b. Matters to report*** Income received totals £2,148.74 and includes hall hire, allotment rent and a VAT refund
* The Audited Annual Governance and Accountability Return has been published to the website along with the Notice of Conclusion of Audit.
* The Finance Committee is meeting on 30th November to consolidate the requests for the 2021-22 budget.
* Cllr Collins reported she has carried out a review of Clerk’s job description and it has been agreed with the Vice Chairmen and Village Hall sub-committee that the Parish Clerk is the best person to be managing staff, the Village Hall and some of the other duties that are not in the original job description. Cllr Collins offered to update the job description and follow the advice on deciding pay scales from SLCC & NALC. It will mean the Clerk is paid at a higher pay award. The Finance Committee will formally discuss which pay scale point at its next meeting which is open to the public and make a recommendation to full Council to be agreed at the December meeting. Councillors were asked to raise any questions or concerns with Cllr Collins.
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| **8. PLANNING COMMITTEE REPORT*** Riverhead Parish Council did declare an interest in the Parish Council’s consultation response on the Village Hall solar panels application.
* Planning applications reviewed in the month were:

20/03031/HOUSE- The Orchard, Montreal Road 20/03060/HOUSE – 175 Marborough Crescent 20/03054/HOUSE – 16 The Close 20/02809/FUL - Riverhead Village Hall, Amherst Hill 20/03232/HOUSE - 35 Chipstead Lane * Planning permission was granted for 116 Marlborough Crescent and First & Second Floor 3 The Square.
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| **9. CORRESPONDENCE*** General correspondence continues to be distributed by email when received to the office email address.
* The KALC meeting 20th November has been cancelled.
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| **10. CLERK’S OFFICE*** Care for our Community has re-started but there have been no new requests to date. One of Riverhead’s youngest volunteers helping out a shielding resident will be interviewed live by Gloria Hunniford for television.
* Cllr Himsworth has reviewed all the risk assessments and summarised the actions needed and this list was previously distributed. Cllr Collins reported that she had completed a risk assessment in conjunction with the Clerk for the use of display screen equipment by employees due to the change in work place. No further issues were added and Councillors were reminded this is a working document and can be added to at any time.
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The meeting closed at 20.28 pm