

Minutes of Langdon Annual Parish Meeting
Monday 24 April 2017 7.30 p.m.
East Langdon Parish Hall

Present: Cllr C Shaw (chairman), Cllr J Dyer, Cllr D Jarvis, Cllr A Minns, Cllr B Price-Stephens, Cllr J Watson, The Clerk, County Cllr S Manion, District Cllr K Morris and six members of the public

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 April 2016 were approved as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr A Minns

Seconded: Cllr J Watson

2. Matters arising

Defibrillator Notices on the parish boards advise members of the public of the location of the defibrillator. The equipment is checked each month and it was noted that the battery and pads will be due for renewal in the near future.

3. Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust

This year's visiting speaker, Kelly August, gave a talk on the work of the Trust that is a secondary care service working with GPs and others in primary care to improve provision for mental health and social care. The work involves liaising with GPs with the aim of setting up hubs with specialist nurses in surgeries and working with NHS England to create refresher packages for GPs. The Trust caters for a diverse range of issues including eating disorders, older people and the mental health of mothers and infants. There are two secure areas in the county and an in-patient unit for new mothers is to be set up probably in the Dartford area.

Cllr Minns commented on the need to remove the stigma attached to mental health. Cllr Jarvis referred to the recent highlighting of mental health issues by members of the Royal family and the need to encourage people to talk to others about their problems. Mr Hyde expressed concern about the negative press that the NHS receives and the need for good news to be celebrated.

Cllr Minns proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker.

4. Refreshments There was a break for refreshments before the reports.

5. Chairman's Report

The Chairman began by thanking the parish councillors and clerk for their involvement in the many aspects of the council's business. The council met in public on 13 occasions but much background work is carried out by email and attendance at various local council organisations. Special mention went to the parish clerk Jannine Hyde, who is retiring after 10 years, for her tireless efforts in supporting the council and regularly going over and beyond the clerk's duties to ensure Langdon parish is well served. There have been several responses to the clerk vacancy and an appointment will be made in time for a start in June.

On behalf of the community, thanks are extended to everyone who contributes to making Langdon a better place to live, whether it be by working with and advising the parish council, running a village organisation or giving time to maintaining the village greens, churchyards, playing field and village halls. Thanks also to those who support the range of village events during the year –

Harvest Supper, Guitar Recital, Quiz evenings, Jazz evening, West Langdon Spring Walk, Remembrance Day, Commonwealth Day, Carols on the Green.

14 planning applications were received for comment, mostly for minor works. The Old Engine Shed solar farm appeal was dismissed in April 2016 after a long delay, so preserving our open countryside. More recently the application for 10 dwellings at Westside as identified in the DDC local plan was approved despite the strong opposition on grounds of traffic access, parking and road safety. In April DDC refused the outline application for 2 dwellings adjacent to Roseacre, East Langdon Road; the main reason being the prevention of sporadic development outside the settlement (village) boundaries, which is strictly in line with DDC's Local Plan.

The 20mph zone in East Langdon came into force in September, fully funded from the KCC member's fund. So far it has been a partial success; some drivers still ignore the reduced speed limit. The Highways Lengthsman councillor Tony Minns, is very active in monitoring the roads and grass verges for safety conditions, reporting the issues via the Kent Highways on-line portal. Tony's tenacity in pursuing KCC Highways to get the faulty street lamps repaired is showing results with just one lamp at Holland's Hill still out.

Last year the parish council set a budget of £12,643 to meet its planned expenditure, including support for local organisations and grant allocation. Under The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, smaller authorities now are obliged to review their accounting and auditing procedures. All Langdon parish council financial matters are published on the new website, together with information required by the Transparency Code 2015 on council activities, spending, and governance. This has created a considerable workload and a review of our data security; fortunately the parish council has received a Government grant to purchase a new dedicated computer system to comply with the Transparency Code requirements, rather than rely on the Clerk's personal IT system.

The Government's Devolution agenda continues to move forward and local councils are considering the downward devolution of certain services and decision-making to parish council level. The options will need to be explored, and crucial to the process is a Local Neighbourhood Plan in which a community can shape development in its area. Several councillors are booked onto training seminars in May to gain a better understanding of the benefits and potential workload involved. The revised training budget will allow more councillors to take advantage of courses.

Darren Jarvis was co-opted in October last year to fill the long outstanding vacancy. With a full complement the parish council will be in a stronger position to meet the challenges which lie ahead in these uncertain times and all parishioners are invited to work with the council to make Langdon a safe and pleasant place to live.

6. Reports from Village Organisations

East Langdon Parish Hall

2016 has been a good year for the hall, it being well used for a variety of activities by the local residents and several external organisations. As well as the usual local lettings a Saturday morning Keep Fit club started in November and the Langdon Table Tennis club is making more use of the hall for their A, B and C teams.

The rentals brought in £5215 but basic running costs were £4800 including an annual electricity bill of £2093. By the end of 2016, the accounts showed a balance of £5329, £4000 of which was reserved for the roof replacement project. Although most of the hall's income is from letting fees (the Bowls Club and Dog Training club being the biggest contributors), nearly £1200 is received from donations (coffee club and Phone box book sales), and fund-raising events such as Quiz evenings and the Jazz evenings. Thanks go to everyone who organises or supports these activities.

The parish council has been accumulating a reserve fund for the roof project which stood at £6000 by the end of last year to be added to the £4000 in the hall account. A grant of £9450 has been offered from the "Awards for All" Big Lottery scheme which represents 50% of the roof replacement costs. The type of roof covering is being finalised and work is expected to begin this summer.

The parish hall is here to serve the whole community and without it the opportunity to socialise and enjoy life in as a village community would be lost. There is a risk of taking the hall for granted but it requires a long-term programme of renovation and updating to keep it a safe and pleasant facility.

The hall committee invites everyone to make suggestions and work with the committee to ensure the hall meets both present and future needs.

West Langdon Village Hall

A successful Harvest Supper was held in October 2016 when a raffle in support of Demelza House raised £122 and £63 was collected for Kelly Turner.

Table tennis and the book shop provided the bulk of the income and DDC again granted 100% rate relief. Electricity bills grow larger despite the installation of a smart meter!

The book shop brought in £96 in 2016 and is once again open for business although in need of a coat of paint.

East Langdon Playing Field

The playing field continues to be one of the most popular recreational locations in the Dover area. Its rural location, open space and range of play equipment draws visitors from well beyond our parish; residents from Hawkinge, Mongeham and Eythorne being among the most recent to visit this year. Langdon Playing Field is a victim of its own success and its popularity increases the wear and tear on some of the facilities resulting in a number of remedial measures including:

- Re-surfacing of the car park to level out the ruts and put down fresh layer of granite aggregate. This was done by local committee volunteers with plant machinery supplied by local residents.
- Installation of a car park barrier gate (again by volunteers) to allow the area to be locked to overnight car traffic.
- Improvement to signage for safety notices and litter control.
- During the recent Easter holidays, the committee received several complaints from local residents about the amount of litter left next to the

overflowing bins. The weekly rubbish collection is sometimes insufficient to cope with the quantity of waste left during busy periods. An additional large bin has now been installed to provide extra storage. Emptying the additional bins is done by the committee as they are not included in the annual service contract.

In the children's play area one set of swings had to be taken out of commission due to timber rot. After some lengthy discussions the manufacturers supplied two new sets of equipment under their warranty cover, the installation work being met from project funds.

Safety inspections are carried out on a weekly basis with an independent annual inspection being done each summer. Minor repairs are done by the committee using the small amount of contingency funds available but bigger projects like the replacement of the wooden embankment slide steps will need funding from elsewhere.

As in the past the committee is grateful to Langdon Parish Council for meeting the annual costs of insurance, grass cutting and safety inspection but to cover additional expenditure the committee needs to look for other ways to generate income. Everyone is welcome to use the facilities but the committee invites ideas as to how they can be sustained for future generations.

East Langdon School

A very detailed report highlighted the successes and challenges of the year. There continues to be a high level of interest in the school and there are 73 children on roll. Attendance is once again expected to be above 96% but punctuality, although generally good, is affected by a few parents who persist in bringing their children late to school.

Standards at the end of key stage are very high and 3 of the 4 year 6 pupils have gained places at a grammar school. Improvements continue to be made and the school received a "Good" judgement in the July 2016 Ofsted. The school is well supported by the local authority and has received a number of letters of congratulation on the improvements that have been made.

The school offers a wide range of clubs and the choir is especially well attended. Year 5 and 6 children again took part in the Commonwealth Raise the Flag Day in March 2017, held on the East Langdon Village Green. Visits out of school have included the Museum of Kent Life and the Wartime Tunnels at Dover Castle while years 5 and 6 had a successful residential trip to Manor Adventure's Mill Rye Centre in Norfolk. The school supports local and national charities and over £2000 has been raised during the year.

The age of the buildings dictates an ongoing need for maintenance that is provided by the site manager whose pride in the school is demonstrated in both internal and external decoration. The school roof on the oldest part of the building will be replaced by the Local Authority when funds permit; in the interim snow guards have been installed to catch falling tiles.

The thriving PTFA continue to hold both social and fund raising events. The Christmas Market and Summer Fair raised over £2000. A log cabin has been purchased to provide an additional space for meetings and storage.

Budget concerns are a barrier to improvement and innovation. A drop in numbers entering reception coupled with a high number of leavers and a reduction in pupil premium has resulted in restructuring of classes and a reduction in teaching and support staff.

The priority for the future is to continue to improve standards and to ensure that all children make good progress whilst at Langdon. The school will continue to work closely with the Local Authority HMI to move the school towards an “outstanding” outcome at the next Ofsted.

East Langdon Church

St. Augustine’s continued to provide three services a month together with all the great Feast Days in the Church’s calendar. Reverend Roger Harley and his wife Camilla moved to Shropshire in September but the support of Reverend Roger Broughton together with the vicar, Reverend Diane Fawcett ensures regular Eucharist services can be held.

There were no baptisms or weddings in 2016 but very sadly one of our long term members of our church community, Jan Tjoonk, died in October. A tree has been planted in the churchyard to commemorate his life here.

A number of events are organised each year to augment the funds to maintain the church and churchyard and in 2016 £1,400 was raised from a Daffodil Tea/Easter Egg Hunt in April, Garden Party in July, Allotment Fete in August (it rained!) and a Beetle Drive/Harvest Supper in October. In December the residents of Church Farm Mews laid on mulled wine and eats for our annual Carols on the Green which was greatly appreciated by all who turned out. The PCC is very grateful for the support given by the residents of Langdon Parish. Charitable giving in the year matched that of 2015 being £850.

For the first time for many years a Civic Service was held on Remembrance Sunday 2016 which was extremely well supported with representatives from the Lord Lieutenant’s Office, the Parish Council, the Police, the Armed Services and the Scouts/Beavers attending.

The allotment gardens are fully let and the fruits of the gardeners’ labours are clear to see. More work has been carried out on the boundary hedges and thanks go to Langdon Parish Council for their grants of £500 for grass strimming in the churchyard and the work on the Allotment boundary hedges.

2016 was another busy year for the St. Augustine’s PCC and together with our vicar, Diane Fawcett, thanks go to the Parish Council and the people of the villages for their continued support in keeping St. Augustine’s not just open but thriving.

West Langdon Church

St Mary’s church continues to hold, mainly communion, services on the third Sunday of each month. Services are also held at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Sunday and Harvest Festival. The four Churches Songs of Praise service took place in October when the theme was “Our Senses.”

Weddings usually only occur every five or ten years but in 2016 there were two in the month of July!

The main fund raising event of the year, The Spring Walk on a sunny day at the end of April was again very successful and thanks go to all who supported. Proceeds from an enjoyable Harvest Supper also contributed towards the upkeep of the church building.

The PCC thanks the Parish Council for their grant towards the grass cutting in the churchyard.

The Langdon Bowls Club

Members continue to enjoy playing bowls despite a reduction in membership caused by people moving away. A decision was made to restrict sessions to Friday nights during the winter months in order to reduce costs and this could become a permanent arrangement unless membership increases. The summer period is usually a peak time when numbers are boosted by long-standing members from the camp-site.

East Langdon Cricket Club

East Langdon Cricket Club finished second in the league after forfeiting a game due to lack of players during the holiday period.

The current spell of dry weather has meant that the square has had to be watered for safety reasons using up precious funds.

The club was founded in 1919 after the 1914-18 war and will celebrate its centenary in 2019. New members are always welcome.

7. Questions from the public

Playing field Mr Colin Smith suggested that a metal box be installed in the car park with a notice inviting visitors to make a voluntary contribution towards the upkeep of the facility. The need to generate income was discussed with suggestions including an ice cream van and research into organisations such as Just Giving.

Cricket Club Centenary Mr Smith advised that the cricket club will celebrate its centenary in 2019 raising the possibility of a local celebration.

The meeting closed at 9.30 pm

Signed

Dated