

Minutes of Langdon Annual Parish Meeting
Monday 18 April 2016 7.30 p.m.
East Langdon Parish Hall

Present: Cllr C Shaw (chairman), Cllr S Craft, Cllr J Dyer, Cllr A Minns, Cllr J Watson, The Clerk, County Cllr S Manion and seven members of the public

1. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2015 were approved as a true record.

Proposed: Cllr J Dyer

Seconded: Cllr A Minns

2. Matters arising

Defibrillator The chairman advised that the defibrillator is available for use by members of the community at all times and signs indicating the siting of the equipment have been placed in all the notice boards. Discussions are underway to make training available to interested parties.

3. Chairman's Report

In May last year the parish council election was uncontested and all 6 councillors were re-elected with one vacancy still remaining. The council met fourteen times during the year and councillors have also attended district meetings for Operation Stack, Emergency Planning, Policing and local government issues. In between meetings a great deal of work goes on in the background with the Clerk receiving by email, a stream of information notices, consultation reports and documents from national and local organisations.

We find the attendance at meetings of councillors Steve Manion, Keith Morris and Paul Watkins informative and they provides us with a useful channel for feeding issues back to policy makers. The council receives reports from our PCSO Kerry Skirrow and Community Warden Lee Kidd but changes in operational arrangements mean they no longer attend the monthly council meetings. Kerry still calls into the Tuesday Langdon Coffee Club where her presence is welcome and local issues are discussed informally but the formal parish council link is missing which is not satisfactory. Members of the public are always welcome and provide a valuable source of local knowledge and insight! The many areas managed and discussed by the parish council are minuted and published on noticeboards, by newsletter and on-line My sincere thanks to everyone involved with the parish council.

Planning: 15 planning applications were received during the year. Most were straightforward being for minor works or single houses. However a down-sized re-submission of the Old Engine Shed Solar Farm was received last summer. We spent a great deal of time re-analysing the application and remained firmly against the proposal, as did the DDC Planning Committee. The applicants have lodged an appeal and we await the Inspector's decision. We are keen to further our understanding of the planning processes and have had some very useful dialogues with the DDC Planning officers to clarify what is allowed under permitted development. Planning application decision notices containing the case officer's reasoning and conditions are also informative.

Financial matters are discussed and approved at council meetings, ensuring accountability and public awareness of the areas in which the annual parish precept is spent. This year's budget remains the same as last year which means there is no increase in the parish council tax contribution. The parish council

strives to protect or maintain current services and will use its powers as necessary. It is likely further central government budget restraints will put a downward pressure from KCC to devolve services to parishes. Whether or not we want this responsibility is up for discussion. Likewise the parish council has a role to support and develop community assets and activities. In summary the following received parish council funding: Village halls, Langdon Playing Field, East and West Langdon Churches (grass strimming), East Langdon village green and the Community Orchard (hedge tidying).

Highways and Road Safety

The parish council is concerned about the speed and volume of traffic passing through our narrow lanes. We have opened a project with our KCC member Steve Manion, to implement a 20mph zone by the school in East Langdon and extend a 30mph limit on the village link roads. Traffic survey data has been obtained and we await news of potential partnership funding from KCC members funds. Our narrow lanes are also subject to traffic erosion resulting in pot-holes and damaged verges. In West Langdon a joint Langdon-KCC funded project has installed stout wooded posts to protect the small grass island from damage by turning vehicles. At night, Langdon is getting ever darker as local street lamps are not being replaced or repaired when they fail. Our clerk is in regular contact with Dover District Council and KCC to get the ownership clarified and the repairs implemented before a serious accident occurs.

Focus for 2016-17: To include more community activities and improvements, road safety measures, affordable housing, identifying community assets, brownfield sites, Rights of Way, Council Transparency Code and Freedom of Information compliance, youth engagement, well-being and combating loneliness, Martin Mill station community project.

Thanks to everyone who helps to make Langdon a great parish to live in – especially those who give of their time freely to keep Langdon looking well maintained and organising the social events and special thanks to our clerk.

4. Reports from Village Organisations

East Langdon Parish Hall

The parish hall continues to be well-used by our local organisations and families for social events and parties. Since last year there has been an improvement in the hall usage which is boosting the income but weekday afternoons remain vacant.

The 2015 accounts show the total income as £6010 with basic running costs of £5186 including an annual electricity bill of £1600. Overall outgoings were £5352. By the end of 2015, the accounts showed a balance of £4408, £3000 of which is in reserve for the main roofing works.

Other fund raising events included two quiz evenings (£290) and a Jazz evening by “The FB Pocket Orchestra in February this year. The hall also received donations from the local phone box book sales and coffee club. The parish council continues to give support grants for various maintenance projects for which we are very grateful.

A maintenance programme was drawn up in 2015 to improve the appearance of the hall and this included re-painting the main hall, re-aligning the guttering and electrical upgrades. Mrs Jen Terry has been cleaning the hall since April 2015 on a 2 hour per week basis.

The main roof requires replacing and is proving to be more complicated than expected. Being of cement asbestos construction there is an additional cost for removing and disposal of the 100 corrugated sheets. Tenders have been invited for the replacement works and it is hoped that external grant applications to the Big Lottery Fund will be successful.

The hall committee is low in membership; the good news is that Edward Griffiths and Johann Dumele joined the committee at the AGM, making 7 members but there is room for more! As a community your ideas are invited as to how this hall should develop to serve future needs.

West Langdon Village Hall

This has been a year free from major projects and the need to fund raise. The bulk of income came from the table tennis club and the book shop that raised £82. Finances are further helped by DDC granting the hall 100% rate relief.

The 2015 accounts show the total income as £532 with basic running costs of £496 including an annual electricity bill of £108. Overall outgoings were £496. By the end of 2015, the accounts showed a balance of £3017.

The Harvest supper was well attended and thanks go to Peter and Sheila Pound for donating a table top cooker to replace the hot plate that has gone missing. Thanks also to Heather Baker for donating new curtains for the hall.

The small island at the bottom of Church Lane has been protected by the installation of bollards on one side and residents have placed an old tyre planted with seasonal flowers on the other side to encourage better driving habits.

The end of the hall awaits recladding as soon as weather and human resources permit.

Thanks go to the men-folk who mow the village green.

East Langdon Playing Field

The new play and exercise equipment installed in April 2015 has proved to be a great success. The playing field is a very popular venue for other parishes right across Dover District and during the year it has attracted local families, adults and teenagers, Hawthorn campsite visitors, parents and pupils from Langdon Primary who meet there after school, Langdon After-School club and Ripplevale school who organise "Treat" outings for students.

However its popularity has resulted in increased wear and tear on the car park surface which is now in urgent need of repair. LPFA, which is entirely dependent upon generosity, fund raising activities and the generous partnership with Langdon Parish Council has received estimates for a full car park surface refurbishment between £5000 and £12,500! Dog mess and litter are two other negative issues.

The football pitch has not been used as such for some time and, when one set of posts corroded, it was decided to remove them for safety reasons and not replace them. In the children's play area one set of swings had to be taken out of commission due to timber rot. After some lengthy correspondence, the manufacturers have agreed to supply new timbers under the warranty but will not pay for the necessary installation work.

In conclusion, LPFA has been subject to mixed fortunes and perhaps a victim of its own success. LPFA is keen to welcome enthusiastic recruits to the committee as the work generally rests upon the shoulders of just a few volunteers.

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 77 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 continue to be very positive and 7 of the 13 year 6 pupils have gained places at a grammar school. Improvements continue to be made following the last Ofsted and the report from a "mock inspection" commissioned in November 2015 stated, *"Overall, this school is improving quickly and is likely to be graded as being good when the school has its next Ofsted inspection, because pupils are now making faster progress and largely reaching the age related expectations, including secondary readiness. The pace of improvement demonstrates the school's capacity to improve."*

The new National Curriculum is now firmly embedded and learning is enhanced by both local and residential visits. The school offers a wide range of clubs and has been involved with children from other schools in events such as tournaments and festivals. Year 5 and 6 children took part in the Commonwealth Raise the Flag Day in March 2016, held on the East Langdon Village Green. 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 and the transformation of the entrance hall with bright plants. The school gained a Silver gilt Award in the South East in Bloom competition in 2015.

The thriving PTFA continue to hold both social and fund raising events. The Christmas Market, Easter Fair and Summer Fair each raised over £3000.

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 a 'good' outcome at the next Ofsted

East Langdon Church

The last twelve months has been a steady year for our church. We continue to provide a variety of services for our congregation and friends who join us and our numbers are holding up year on year. We are fortunate to have a small but dedicated group of parishioners who manage the church building, the graveyard and the internal fabric. We aim always to make the church an uplifting and

reassuring place for visitors regardless of the reason for the visit. In the past visitors have sometimes not been able to find the church but that has been overcome with the installation of a prominent sign on the bank facing the road.

The allotments have now been occupied for twelve months and all nine plots are let. The fruit orchard is well established and, with the help of a grant from the Parish council, the overgrown and dilapidated hedge on the south side has been cut back and the roadside hedge levelled.

Fund raising is a necessity for both the regular maintenance of the church building and for our charitable giving. In 2015 £1247 was raised from the Daffodil Tea, Garden Party and Harvest Supper which was supplemented by generous giving at special services enabling us to give £856 to local charities and to Appeals such as the Nepal Earthquake and the Refugee Crisis. Working with other churches in the Benefice, we have linked up with organisations such as Migrant Help and Seeking Sanctuary to provide much needed financial and resource assistance for refugees. Dover District Council recognises the parish as a body of people that is ready and able to help.

The vicar, Diane Fawcett, recognises our wish to play a full part within the parish community and encourages us to do so. We are grateful for the huge support given by Langdon Parish council and the people across our parish.

West Langdon Church

Last year was a little easier with no inspections or official visits. Holy Communion services continue to be held on the third Sunday of the month and on Easter Day and Christmas morning. The 70th anniversary of the end of World War 2 was celebrated by a full church at the Four Churches Songs of Praise in August when the theme was "Peace."

Forty kneelers were purchased from St Mary's Church Sittingbourne and are a welcome bright and fresh replacement to the 100 year old ones.

The Spring Walk and Tea were again very successful and thanks go to all who attended and to all the helpers. Generous and welcome funds were also raised at the Harvest Supper and during an evening of carol singing. The support of many people in both West and East Langdon has enabled the church to remain viable.

The Langdon Bowls Club

Bad weather brought about poor attendance during the winter and games were limited to Friday nights in order to remain financially viable. The vacuum cleaner had to be replaced and it is hoped that funds can be rebuilt during the summer months when expenditure on heating is not required.

East Langdon Cricket Club

The club reported a good season in 2015 when they came second in the league and the opening bowler, Ben Doble, was voted the best bowler. New members are still needed for both the Saturday league and Sunday friendly matches.

5. Questions from the public

Playing field Mr Hyde suggested that the committee consider ways of generating income from those who use the field. Mr Griffiths suggested that scalplings could provide an effective temporary repair for the car park.

6. **Refreshments** There was a break for refreshments before the guest speaker's talk

7. **Kent, Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance**

The meeting was treated to a stimulating talk from Mr Chris Longfield on the work of the air ambulance (KSSAA) operating from its bases at Marden and Redhill. KSSAA supports two helicopters, one of which is new, has an extended range and has allowed the introduction of night flying. KSSAA, one of the oldest of the eighteen organisations, is the only one with the capability to commit to a 24 hour service. KSSAA achieved another first by overcoming the problems posed by carrying blood for transfusions and being able to administer it at the correct body temperature. Thanks to a method for temperature control developed for use in Afghanistan, the helicopters now carry four units of O- blood. The team consists of 10 pilots, 9 doctors all of whom must have been A & E or anaesthetist consultants and 14 paramedics and can carry out at the scene of an accident every procedure that can be carried out in A & E. In 2015 2,223 missions were carried out. Around 25% of all cases are very critical need to be taken to trauma centres at either Kings or St Georges and occasionally The Royal London. The organisation is entirely dependent on charitable donations and operating costs for 2016 are expected to be around £7m.

Cllr Minns proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Longfield.

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm

Signed

Dated