

ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Annual Meeting of the Parish Monday 17th April 2023
at 7.00 pm Alkham Village Hall

Minutes

Present. Chairman of the Parish Council Neil Burrows

9 members of the public

Also present : Irene Bowie Clerk Alkham Parish Council

The Chairman of the Parish Council. Neil Burrows welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of the Parish.

Councillor Burrows presented the Kent Association of Local Councils Community Award to Mr D Barnard for his leadership and dedication to the production of an Alkham Parish Plan.

1. Apologies:

Apologies were received. There were none

2. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 9th May 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

3. Police Representative's and Community Warden's Reports. No Reports.

Parish Council Annual Report:

4. Presented by Chairman of the Parish Council Neil Burrows

This is my 20th Chairman's Report and having decided not to stand again as a Parish Councillor in the next month's parish elections. I am pleased that our council finally agreed to the Parish Plan in January this year, and I look forward to seeing the many volunteers who will be needed to implement this community-led plan.

I re-iterate my comments made last year on Alkham's 'Highways Improvement Plan'. This is a continuous live document, and we are allowed to submit TWO priorities per year. Project Managers then investigate our top one or two. In most cases match funding by the Parish Council is required.

This past year has seen a speed survey requested by Kent County Council agreed at a cost of £600 to the Parish Council. A new bus shelter has been installed at Wolverton Crossroads. Kent County Council grant-funded the project, which required a generous donation of part of the site from a local landowner. A new bench which will replace the one behind the village green bus shelter will be delivered soon. The Parish Council have decided to designate it the Queen's Jubilee and the King's Coronation Bench.

Last autumn a new tarmac path was laid to connect Newlyns Meadow with the path behind the Village Hall. It was funded equally by KCC Councillor David Beaney and the Parish Council.

New equipment has been purchased by the Parish Council to help the Speed Watch Team in their endeavours to help in the reduction of traffic speed throughout the centre of the village.

Over 50% of Alkham Residents live outside the Village Envelope. I would highly recommend to the new Parish Council that they establish the boundaries and include all residents of Alkham in their plans, not just those who live in the centre of the Village.

Finally, I wish to express my thanks to my Vice Chairman, Martin Hibbert and all councillors who have freely given up their own time for Alkham Parish Council and to Irene, our clerk, for keeping all the council's affairs in order.

Financial Report.

Gross Income for 2022/23 was £16,171. The precept for 2022/23 was £14,720, an increase of £934 over the previous year, interest £199 and grants of £1900 of which £1800 was from KCC and £100 from DDC.

Our expenditure was £23,448. As expenditure exceeded income, the difference is taken from the Parish Council Reserves. Unplanned expenditure included the new pathway costing £4944, a new bench on the Village Green costing £1432, Speedwatch speed gun costing £2106.

The closing balance as at 31st March 2023 was £41,884.13.

5. Kent County Council Report:

KCC Councillor Beaney

This year has been very challenging for everyone living in Kent. KCC along with so many other Councils have struggled to deal with difficult problems all year.

We have seen huge inflation, the war in Ukraine and our borders constantly being broke with Asylum seekers.

We had a huge task of trying to set a budget this year, final monitoring at the 9th month which is December showed a predicted overspend of 53 million pounds we was able to use a reserve tank of £25million against this, however it is inevitable that we will over spend this year.

As mentioned before we have huge mandatory sectors of KCC that could use our budget alone, SEND being one of those.

We have had to deal with constant battles with border force. In the last year we have had three occasions where the problem has become a huge problem for Dover Town and Kent. For the up and coming Easter weekend ferries are being asked not to book too many coaches on to one boat to try and ease immigration problems at passport control.

We have continued to help residents as much as we can. In the last several school holidays we have given out food vouchers for eligible children we continue to give free school meals, we have run a financial hardship scheme and have tried to keep as much support and services going to entitled residents with energy vouchers and water bills being paid.

We saw children's services receiving outstanding by Ofsted. In February KCC was designated one of the only 14 trailblazer councils for developing in the government's family hubs which is designed to provide integrated support for families and children this eventually gives us to access to 10 million pounds for transformation funding over the next two years.

We have seen a increase in Asylum seekers entering our country on small boats we are currently trying to home and support 1390 unaccompanied Asylum seeking children from last year and we have now seen 260 enter this year that will receive the same help and support.

As a country we made the choice to try to help people in Ukraine by offering them refuge in England, Kent currently have 1767 guests staying with 854 sponsors. We have 349 Ukrainian children in our primary schools and 234 in our secondary schools.

I will continue to help and support our rural buses. we have received some money from central government but unfortunately, we won't know how that is being spent until June or July this year.

KCC have fixed 14000 potholes in the last year and have patched 68414 sqm of road. We have received another 6 million for well needed road repairs.

KCC are constantly looking for funding, they have just received 1.83 million to put towards refurbing 5 of their old buildings, this money is going to be spent on making them more efficient and this includes new windows.

We saw 19007 apply for secondary school places 78.2% of children got there first choice.

I believe you will see a difference in how s106 money will be contained when planning applications for larger developments go forward, I can see a lot more monies being asked for better forms of sustainable transport.

This is just a few points from a very busy year. Many thanks KCC Cllr Beaney.

Dover District Councillor – Alkham Parish Council Annual Summary Report April 2023

To be made available after the 4th May Elections.

6. Reports from Village Organisations and Representatives.

Alkham Valley Society.

Alkham Valley Society Update (Dated April 17, 2023) Harlan Webber, Treasurer at the Annual Alkham Parish Annual Meeting.

The AVS was formed in back in 1977 to “support the preservation of the natural environment and unique character of the Alkham Valley.” At last November's AGM, with 54% of members in attendance, we set out steps to evolve for the future.

I have only been involved for the last two years, but with committee changes and a boost in membership.... you may already have noticed via the Alkham Newsletter: We have a new web site, more social gatherings, volunteer clean-up events, and so on.... And in most cases, extra community spirit and some fun.

Looking forward we have the new community led parish plan which pulls together the views of the local community and their priorities, the AVS sees a real opportunity in assisting with the conservationist portions of the vision and priorities detailed in this plan.

Along with the new initiative from Dover District Council detailed in their heritage strategy (in which they stress the importance of local community involvement in the protection of the historic environment), there are significant parallels to the objectives of the Alkham Valley Society as well as a formal framework for many of the topics covered already in the community led parish plan. The vision therefore of the Alkham Valley Society is to not only maintain its mission but also take the opportunity as “conservationist” ally to:

- Reuse (the existing frameworks),
- Refocus (its approach to today's reality),
- Relaunch and Reinvigorate the society based on the community led parish plan, the Highways Improvement Plan, etc.

And all of this effort done within the framework of the Dover District Heritage strategy while evolving the AVS for the future. To help us do this, we have a model, created by the St Margaret's Bay Conservation Association, a community group put together in March 2021, with the aim of safeguarding and preserving their conservation area. It worked with Dover District Council to actually produce a formal character appraisal and management plan for the area which was officially launched in November 2022.

Just some of the recent milestones for the Alkham Valley Society are:

- launch of its first website, AlkhamVS.org, as portal to communicate and share,
- commissioned a review of its foundation documents including a re-write of its charter,
- AVS formally submitted detailed comments relating to the area for the Dover District Local Plan 2040
- compiled a 15 year on-line library of Alkham Newsletters (now migrated to Alkham.org)

And we continue to act to help the community, with either "just for fun" or "work party" social events:

- organising an AVS Social & Ideas Sharing Event run monthly at the Marquis
- recruiting volunteers for things like Village Hall Carpark Clean-Up
- being creative with the Spring Snow Drop Walk (& Litter-Grab)
- and enjoying the Annual Alkham Valley Christmas Walk.

And as I said, we are really enjoying the diversity of our new members, so all are welcome..

7. Questions from the public:

Questions regarding speeding traffic through the Village and the Dover Local Plan were discussed.

The meeting closed at 7:25 pm.

Signed:

Date:

Name (Please Print)

Questions regarding progress of the parish plan, speeding traffic through the Village, Public Rights of way and the Dover Local Plan were discussed.

The meeting closed at 7:34 pm.

Signed :

Date: