

**ALKHAM PARISH COUNCIL**  
**Annual Meeting of the Parish Monday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2024**  
**at 7.00 pm Alkham Village Hall**

**Minutes**

Present. Chairman of the Parish Council Dennis Bernard

14 members of the public

Also present : Irene Bowie Clerk Alkham Parish Council

The Chairman of the Parish Council, Dennis Barnard welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of the Parish.

**1. Apologies:**

Apologies were received from Marian Libaert, Paul Tapsell and KCC Councillor Beaney.

**2. The Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2023 were agreed as a correct record.**

**3. Police Representative's and Community Warden's Reports.** PC Ellis attended the Meeting and gave an update.

Hello everyone, over the months and March and April we have been quite busy within the Community Safety Unit with a few ASB issues across the district.

Unfortunately, I was unable to make any of the Parish Council meetings due to leave and other commitments. However, I will make every effort to attend the ones in May.

I have checked our received calls for both Alkham and Caple and from 1st March through to the today's date 30th April we have received 66 calls, and I am pleased to tell you most of these calls are not of an ASB nature. However, saying that if you or anyone else are subject to or witness any ASB Please call 101 and report this.

I was able to get to the farmers market for the drop-in session, so it was nice to but names to faces and also nice to meet you. Unfortunately, I am still on restricted duties so have not been able to get out and about still.

I will however be attending this month's parish council meetings so it will be good to meet more of you.

Please let me know if you have any topics that you would like to be raise from me.

PC Cheryl ELLIS

PC Ellis also advised that the Police were aware of the Traffic Issues in Alkham and that she would attend and assist with some Speed Watch Sessions.

**Parish Council Annual Report:**

**4. Presented by Chairman of the Parish Council Dennis Barnard**

The Chairman thanked both KCC Councillor Beaney and DDC Councillor Hibbert for their updates and reports from DDC.

It has now been a year since the new parish council was elected. When we started we were a group of seven enthusiasts. I would like to thank the previous parish council for their hard work and also praise them for all they were able to achieve with 3-4 Councillors.

The Alkham Community Led Parish Plan was published in September 2023. The parish council has created a structure of working groups and key responsibilities to ensure we are delivering on the agreed outcomes.

We intend to run surgeries for the community and invite our local MP and KCC and DDC Councillors to improve communication.

We are looking to replace some of the play area equipment and repair others.

Whilst we have a Community Led Plan we would like to progress this and develop a Neighborhood Plan.

**5. Dover District Councillor – Alkham Parish Council Annual Summary Report April 2024**

General Annual Ward Report – Alkham, Capel Le Ferne & Hougham – May 2024

Last year saw significant changes within the Dover District Wards and Parish Councils following local elections taking place in May 2023.

Alkham, Capel Le Ferne and Hougham Without Parish Councils saw many new councillors being voted in. All ward parish councils now have a full complement of councillors. This is great to see with people standing and taking up a civic office where they feel that they can make a real difference. Active, interested, and resolute people who are willing to serve and get involved with community matters. Well done!

The new councillors have dealt with several challenges since appointment learning very quickly that there is not an expectation that they should have all the solutions for their community immediately to hand. This is an important first lesson which can be both frustrating and challenging more so where there has been a complete replacement of councillors. There is also an essential need to recognize the benefits to be gained from training and experience to help towards a better understanding of the councillor's role which will help tremendously towards them being better placed to deal with community concerns and challenges. The Parish Council Clerks play an essential and important support role to councillors on this service aim. My job will be to continue to support and encourage those aims.

All ward Parish Councils share similar community challenges. All councils have built up a wealth of knowledge and experience on how to deal with these challenges. One of my continuing focusses throughout the year has been encouraging ward parish councils to work collaboratively together to help build and develop stronger ward Parish Councils towards fully understanding the views and needs of their communities – and be in a stronger position to help deliver them.

I am please to report that there has been a significant sea change in the latter part of 2023 when there has been a reaching out by all ward Parish Councils to each other on familiar challenges, sharing gained knowledge and experience, with the collective aim towards helping to resolve these challenges. This is great news, which I fully support and will encourage going forward. Good networking is the mortar that helps towards building strong ward Parish Councils! My task is to also help contribute to open government and encourage all councillors to participate in the democratic process.

Last year and into the beginning of this New Year the economic impact of the pandemic and the current world circumstances lingers on with the cost of living and inflation still paramount in our personal and

working lives. Much help and support has been offered to communities via the County and District Councils and I have ensured that my ward Parish Councils have been kept fully informed on what is available.

My job remains the same – to provide oversight to ensure the interests of my ward Parish Councils and communities are fully represented. I will continue to work hard to support my ward communities, to listen and stand up for residents and get things done on their behalf.

Cllr Martin Hibbert

Alkham, Capel Le Ferne and Hougham Without

## 6. **Reports from Village Organisations and Representatives.**

### **Alkham Village Hall.**

Report by Catie Webber on behalf of the Chairman Brian Wimsett.

The Village Hall has a new website and included is a new booking site which will make the process of hiring the hall much easier.

When the accounts were prepared for the financial year the difference between expenditure and income was £188. However, this was reduced to £87 pounds due to late invoices for payments being received.

The Village Hall is a Charitable Trust and does not seek to make huge profits but also does not wish to be run at a loss. This year is the first year for a considerable time that the Village Hall accounts are in the black.

New business from the Milkshake Truck has been welcomed and has contributed to the electricity costs and the maintenance of the car park.

A new path is being created from the road to the entrance of the Village Hall.

Future projects being reviewed are for a new kitchen and the re-decoration of the hall.

### **Alkham Valley Society (AVS)**

Report by Catie Webber Vice Chairman AVS.

The AVS began 2023 with the devastating news of our Secretary and President/Founder's ill health.

We pushed on with the litter pick in February. This was a success and was repeated with the clearing of the car park.

Whilst not having as many formal meetings the members continue to meet socially every two months.

Cleaning of some overgrown PROW's, wood chippings were laid down much to the delight of walkers.

In the Autumn the Executive Committee adopted a new constitution. This was posted on the new AVS website. Thanks go to Harlen Webber for designing the new website.

December and January saw the Chairman attend the DDC Local Plan Hearings to represent the views of the AVS.

In January the Vice Chairman entered the AVS comments on the New Green Infrastructure Project-Making Spaces for Nature consultation.

In February Jo Walker attended the Making Spaces for Nature Workshop on behalf of the AVS.

Late February a litter pick was supported by DDC and 16 bags of rubbish were collected.

Please check the AVS website and the newsletter for membership details and updates.

**Keep Fit.**

Report by Catie Webber.

The nature of the group has changed from dance movements to chair-based exercises and low impact cardio exercises. The emphasis is on movement and flexibility.

The classes cost £3 per session, and they are simple, local and friendly. Please come and join us.

**7. Questions from the public:**

- Location of minutes and agendas for parish council meetings

**The meeting closed at 7:31 pm.**

**Signed:**

**Date:**

**Name (Please Print)**

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**Questions from the public:**

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

The meeting closed at 7:31 pm.