

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF
ELMSTED PARISH COUNCIL ON 14th DECEMBER 2023 HELD IN EVINGTON HALL**

Present: Cllr Burge (Chair) Cllr J Argar
Cllr P Argar Cllr Wright

In attendance: 1 member of the public, District Cllr Martin and The Clerk

		To be actioned by
1.	To receive and approve apologies for absence.	
	Apologies were received from Cllrs Castle, Francesconi, Stanley, County Cllr Carey and District Cllr Hollingsbee.	
2.	To receive declarations of interest (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests). The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared.	
	Cllr Burge declared a personal interest on Planning Application 23/1399/FH.	
3.	To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2023	
	The minutes of the previous meeting were signed as a true record.	
4.	To discuss matters arising from the above minutes not covered by the agenda.	
	The Clerk explained that the defibrillator for Bodsham has been ordered and the cheque has been sent, once it arrives, the Clerk will ensure Cllr Stanley is aware and he will arrange fitting with G A Watts.	
5.	To receive a Report from District/County Councillors	
	Cllr Hollingsbee had sent a report, this was taken as read. (see Appendix A) Cllr Carey had sent a report, this was taken as read. (see Appendix B) Cllr Martin gave her report (see Appendix C)	
6.	Public session: To receive questions and comments from the public on any agenda item.	
	The member of the public approached the Council to ask that they reconsider their response to planning application: 22/0481/FH. The Parish Councillors will have a discussion with neighbours and between themselves to agree a response. The applicant discussed that there could be 30 pitches in continuous residence rather than 60 pitches over 60 days.	
7.	Financial matters:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note/authorise the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the Parish Council's financial position, Chair to initial bank statement. ii. To authorise any payments iii. To agree the budget for 2024-25 iv. To approve the precept for 2024-25 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note/authorise the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. To note the Parish Council's financial position, Chair to initial bank statement. The financial position as at 30th November 2023 was noted and the bank statement initialled. ii. To authorise any payments There were no payments due. iii. To agree the budget for 2024-25 The budget was approved for 2024-25 iv. To approve the precept for 2024-25 The precept for £2250 was approved. 	

8.	To consider any changes to the Risk Assessment.	
	The Parish Council considered any changes to the Risk Assessment. The Clerk is to chase the arborial report on the tree in the church car park.	
9.	Planning matters: to approve the responses to any recent planning applications.	
	Planning Applications received were: 23/1399 – Retrospective application for Air Source Heat Pump 23/1423 – Lawful Development Certificate for Storage and Distribution 23/1116 – Lawful Development Certificate for Solar Panels 23/1484 – Replacement Dwelling	
10.	Any Other Business (for information purposes only):	
	There was a discussion regarding the placing of a defibrillator near the church.	
11.	Determining the time and place of ordinary meetings of the Council up to and including the next annual meeting of the Council.	
	Thursday 14 March 2024 Thursday 9 May 2024	

The meeting closed at 8.25pm.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix A.

District Councillor Report – Elmsted 14 December 2023

Contact jenny.hollingsbee@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk Mobile 07887918458

Where has 2023 gone? It certainly has been a challenging year for many residents. And perhaps it is good to be reminded that there are a number of 'Cost of Living' Schemes run by the Council to support people who are struggling – see Help and support with the cost of living – Folkestone & Hythe District Council (folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

Rural England Prosperity Fund – just reminder that this fund is now open and expression of interests can be made via the website Rural England Prosperity Fund - Folkestone Works I have been encouraging Village Halls and Community Centre's in North Downs West to consider applying to this fund for energy efficiency improvements, ie solar panels.

Dungeness Nuclear Industry – unfortunately the motion I put to full Council on 29 November was not supported by the opposition. The motion proposed to resolve unequivocal support for the Nuclear Industry at Dungeness which currently provides approximately 1,000 jobs. There is also the possibility of small modular reactors being located there. The motion was amended to completely obliterate the reference to Dungeness or Nuclear. See Minutes of the Meeting Agenda for Council on Wednesday, 29th November, 2023, 7.00 pm | Folkestone & Hythe District Council (modern.gov.co.uk)

Otterpool Park LLP– There has been no further update on seeking a strategic partner to bring in additional finance to the project. However, the leader in answering a question at full Council, said that the original charter and planning terms of reference would be adhered to. He also said that the intention was to keep control of the project! Just before Christmas, the appointment of Gary Ridgewell was announced as the new Managing Director to replace Andy Jarrett. I welcome this appointment and wish him every success in taking the project forward. I would like to record thanks to Andy for his commitment and leadership since the inception of the project and wish him well for the future.

I wish all residents a very Happy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

Appendix B

Report for Elmsted Parish Council meeting 14/12/23

The Government's Autumn Statement was a disappointment for councils that have Social Care responsibilities and we can only hope that the Local Government settlement, which is usually announced just before Christmas, may contain better news.

Demand for social care for the elderly, people with learning disabilities and the care of young people in care now consume a far larger share of our budget than ever before (around 66%) and without extra funding we will need to make disproportionate savings in our other services to stay solvent. I can't remember a time when we haven't faced financial challenges, but the inflation triggered by the war in Ukraine has had a massive impact on our costs. There's some better news for Kent about the recent court proceedings on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. The court has ruled that the Home Secretary has acted unlawfully in the arrangements for dealing with UASC arriving in Kent and in making sure the burden of dealing with them is shared between councils. It's been a problem for many years but the recent increase in numbers has made the situation much worse. We now expect the Home Office to ensure there is a proper transfer scheme in place and to fully fund reception centres here in Kent.

I thought it would be useful to update you all on the many schemes to help people who may be struggling financially or mentally. The best place to look is at Kent Together and there's a link on the home page of Kent County Council at www.kent.gov.uk There's advice about funding, benefits, reducing energy costs, budgeting and how to either get a referral or self refer for help. For those who prefer the phone to the web the number is 03000 41 92 92. Release the pressure is a KCC helpline for those with mental health problems. It's available 24/7 at 0800 107 0160.

KCC's Household Waste Recycling Centres do a great job helping Kent residents recycle excess waste but around half of the waste people take to our sites could be recycled if people pre-sorted it. Staff at the HWRCs have been opening the black sacks to extract cans, bottles, metal, paper and card. The waste is often contaminated by food so we are encouraging people to pre-sort so we can recycle more.

KCC has also just launched a scheme to recycle IT equipment – PCs, laptops, printers and mobile phones. It's open to residents, businesses and organisations and is free to use. You can book a collection slot and your equipment will be wiped of data and reused where possible or recycled when not. See <https://www.kent.gov.uk/environment-waste-and-planning/rubbish-and-recycling/device-recycling-scheme>

The Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty now have a new name - they and the National Parks are now National Landscapes. The name change is important as it's a signal that the AONBs are of equal value to the National Parks. KCC hosts the Kent Downs National Landscape team, and they do brilliant work not least in running the Government's Farming in a Protected Landscape scheme (FIPL). Over a year ago Kent Downs AONB launched with the Parc Naturel Regional des Caps et Marais d'Opale for Geopark status with UNESCO and we're now very hopeful of a positive outcome. Geopark status would raise the profile of these two areas connected by chalk and help promote tourism in our area.

Do please report potholes as the Government has just announced extra funding for our roads and it's important that we make sure that we get our share of this extra funding for rural roads. Go to www.kent.gov.uk and look for Highways or ring 0300 41 81 81.

Susan Carey

Member for Elham Valley, Kent County Council

Appendix C

Otterpool Park - Following the resignation of Andy Jarret, a new interim Managing Director, Gary Ridgwell, has been appointed at Otterpool Park LLP. Gary was previously the Construction Director at Otterpool Park LLP for the past two years and knows the development intimately.

F&HDC are continuing their progress in looking for a strategic partner for Otterpool Park. They are only looking to enter into agreements with those partners who have a track record of facilitating development at scale, and a commitment to delivering the Council's vision for Otterpool Park.

Green Business Grant - There has been a slow take up of the Folkestone and Hythe Green Business Grant Scheme to help small businesses to save carbon, become more energy efficient and, in turn, to save the business money. Details can be found on The Folkestone Works website.

Rural England Prosperity Fund Grant – I mentioned this grant in my last report, and full details of the grant are now available on The Folkestone Works website.

Safer Streets Funding - F& HDC have made a successful bid and have been awarded a Safer Streets government grant of £335,546.64. The fund will be used to invest in crime prevention initiatives that focus on reducing levels of crime in the district, anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls.

Air Show - Sadly, because of the unavailability of the Red Arrows next August, the Folkestone Air Show has had to be cancelled. The Air Show will be kept under review and alternative events are being considered.

UNESCO Geopark status - I am pleased to report that, at the recent Full Council meeting, Councillor Stephen Scoffham's motion to support the Kent Downs application to secure cross channel UNESCO global Geopark status for the Kent Downs national landscape together with the neighbouring protected landscape in France was unanimously supported.

Christmas Frauds - At this time of year there are more opportunities for criminals to scam people. The Kent Fraud Alert System has details of several frauds they have been recently reported to them. One of them is suspicious text messages or emails, possibly asking you to verify your personal financial details. These can be reported by forwarding suspicious texts to 7726 or emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2024.

Contact: Elaine.Martin@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk