

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF SALTWOOD PARISH COUNCIL HELD AT
SALTWOOD VILLAGE HALL ON MONDAY, 04 JULY, 2016 AT 6.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: Cllr. N. Matthews (Vice-Chairman), Cllr. A. Ling, Cllr. Miss L. Sadler, Cllr. Mrs. L. Spice, Cllr. J. Stevens and Cllr. Mrs. S. Ware.

In attendance – Cllr. D. Owen– (District Councillor Hythe Ward).

In the absence of the Chairman, Cllr. N. Matthews (Vice-Chairman) chaired the meeting.

75. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received and accepted from Cllr. D. Kenyon-Vaughan (Chairman) and Cllr. Miss S. Carey (KCC for Elham District)

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: None.

77. MINUTES OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 06 JUNE 2016:

The Minutes of Parish Council meeting held on the 06 June 2016 having been circulated were taken as a true record of the meeting and signed by the Chairman. Proposed by Cllr Mrs. L. Spice and seconded by Cllr. J. Stevens.

78. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON THE 06 JUNE 2016:

Queen's 90th Birthday Celebrations – Sunday 12 June 2016. The four events planned – the Family Picnic organised by Saltwood Parish Council, the planting of a tree on the Village Green to commemorate the Queen's 90th Birthday organised by Saltwood Village Society, the WI Tea Party in the Saltwood Church followed by a special evening song were well supported and enjoyed. It was agreed that a vote of thanks be recorded in the minutes to the Castle Green WI, Saltwood Village Society, Cllr. Mrs. S. Ware and Saltwood Church for organising the events.

EIS Website Hosting Service – The Clerk reported that in an e-mail dated 17 June 2016, EIS had confirmed that funding had been approved to continue to support the Website Hosting Service provided by EIS for Parish and Town Council Websites.

79. REPORTS: - (a) County Councillor's Report – Litter - E-mail reported from Cllr. Miss S. Carey on a joint letter on behalf of all 13 Kent councils that had been sent to Mr. S. Jones, Director Highways England, urging him to agree an action plan to make sure that we work together to clean up the litter people leave behind at roadsides and at lay-bys in Kent. Copy of email to be sent to Councillors.

(b) District Councillor's Report - Cllr. D. Owen reported that the Hythe Swimming Pool would be closed for 12 weeks from the 10 July 2016 for essential and urgent repairs to be carried out. They included replacing lining to main pool and replacing chlorine storage system. SDC Cabinet had agreed funding for the works.

Otterpool Park – proposed development of Garden Town- Shepway District Council's expressing of interest had been submitted to Government.

80. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING FOR PUBIC INCLUSION: No matters raised.

81. PLANNING – (a) Planning applications

Y16/0557/SH –3 Tanners Close, Saltwood. Felling of two Ash trees and 1 metre overall reduction of a Holly tree all subject of Tree Preservation Order No 1 of 2003. No objection subject to any comments of Shepway DC Tree Officer.

82. FINANCE:

(a) To report current balances at 04 July 2016

HSBC - Community Account	£500.00
HSBC – Business Account	£15,819.61
Nat. Savings Investments	£ 983.42

(b) Accounts presented for payment –.

100154 - Safeplay Playground Services Ltd. Erection of of Basketgoal Handball equipment at Children's Play Park.	£5820.00 (inc. VAT £970.00)
100155 - Rumwood Nurseries – Metal Tree Guard and Rose Tree shrub compost for tree to be planted in connection with Queen's 90 th Birthday Celebrations.	£60.19 (inc. VAT £10.03)
100156 – Affinity Water – water supply to Fountain Village Green	£17.10
100157 - CPRE – Annual subscription	£36.00
100158 - Clerk's Salary for April, May and June 2016.	£673.59
100159 - Mr. G. Marsh – Mowing Village Green May and June 2016.	£95.00
9.5 hours @ £10.00 per hour	£95.00
STO - RTC - Hire of Committee Room for 4 July 2016	£12.00

Following a proposal by Cllr. Mrs. L. Spice, seconded by Cllr. Miss L. Sadler the above payments were approved.

- (c) **Additional signatories to HSBC bank account -** Following a proposal by Cllr. Mrs. L. Spice and seconded by Cllr. Mrs. S. Ware it was agreed that Cllr. J. Stevens, Cllr. Miss L. Sadler, Cllr. Mrs. L. Spice, Cllr Mrs. S. Ware and Cllr. A. Ling to be signatories to the Parish Council's HSBC bank account. The Clerk to arrange for the appropriate forms to be completed.

83. CHILDREN'S PLAY PARK:

Cllr. Mrs. Spice reported that Safeplay Playground Services had confirmed that the price to adjust the cable on the aerial runway should have been £74.00 plus VAT. Also there were four other items that required attention as follows –

1. Re-secure the litter bin onto the base.
 2. Removal of the old playground sign on the entrance gates.
 3. Removal of the old basketball post and damaged backboard.
 4. Resiting of the existing white football goal to be opposite the new handgoal recently installed.
- Following a proposal by Cllr. Mrs. S. Ware and seconded by Cllr. Miss L. Sadler it was agreed to accept the revised price of £74.00 plus VAT to adjust the cable on the aerial runway and to obtain quotations for carrying out the work listed above.

84. OTTERPOOL PARK:

Following discussion on the meeting Councillors had attended at Shepway on the 7 June 2016 to discuss the District Council's proposed expression of interest for building a new garden town, namely Otterpool Park, it was unanimously agreed that Saltwood Parish Council would write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government expressing their concerns relating to the proposal and the likely impact upon our community and environment. A copy of the letter is attached and forms part of these minutes. It was also agreed that copies of the letter be sent to the Leader of Shepway District Council, to our MP, Mr. Damian Collins and the Parish Councils for Stanford, Sellindge, Lympe, and Postling.

85. OTHER CORRESPONDENCE:

E-mails circulated to Councillors –

28.06.2016 - KALC Bulletin on national developments and meetings.

28.06.2016 - NALC Newsletter June 2016.

03.07.2016 -Shepway District Council Planning Dept. Review of draft update to local validation.

22.06.2016 - Shepway District Council – Heritage Strategy and meetings.

CPRE – New maps of England light pollution.

24.06.2016 - Shepway District Council – Referendum results for Shepway.

86. DATE FOR NEXT REGULAR MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL:

Monday, 03 October 2016 commencing at 6.30 p.m.

PARISH OF SALTWOOD

COPY

Clerk to the Council: Miss J. D. Bessell
3, Grange Road, Saltwood, Hythe, Kent CT21 4QS
Tel: 01303 268362
e-mail: parishofsaltwood@aol.com



The Rt Hon. Greg Clark MP
Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government
2 Marsden Street
London
SW1P 4DF

13 July 2016

Dear Mr Clark

I write in relation to Shepway District Council's expression of interest for building a new garden town, namely Otterpool Park. I am confident that you will be receiving other such letters from not only surrounding Parishes but also many local residents who rightly have concerns in relation to this proposal and the likely impact upon our community and environment.

The Parish Council also has concerns about the way in which Shepway District Council have conducted themselves relating to the preparation of this proposal and the lack of transparency and honesty in their plans.

2015 saw frenzied discussion about the building of a large lorry park to counter the issues caused by Operation Stack on the M20. This lorry park would sit to the north of the M20 and less than a mile away from the planned Garden Town. Despite heavy opposition from residents, Parish Councils, the CPRE and many other reputable bodies this scheme has just been given the go ahead. We stand to lose a large area of beautiful countryside to a concrete car park that may or may not be used on a handful of occasions. Having spent quite some time and energy putting the views of our residents across to Shepway and the Government on this issue we now find ourselves faced once again with a new fight on our hands to help protect the rural and beautiful countryside environment that we live in.

We mention the lorry park for a specific reason. We believe that this agricultural land that Shepway purchased in December 2015 for in excess of £1,000 an acre above the going rate at £5.3 million was in fact purchased as a 'trade off' for the farmer who's land the lorry park is to be built on. The farmer rejected this poorer quality land, quite justifiably, resulting in the Council being left with a large plot of land that they now claim they purchased to levy an income. If they sell the land they risk integrity and more to the point a guaranteed loss of thousands of pounds of tax payer's money.

In January our County Councillor Susan Carey sent an email referring to the purchase of this land stating 'I believe it is a very sound investment. In the immediate future it will continue to be farmed. I am very pleased we have control over this land. There are as yet no plans for what we might do and I am sure you will want to let us know what you want/don't want.'

You can imagine how shocked we were when in April / May we hear of a plan to build not just a few houses but an entire new 'Town'. I am sure you can understand our concerns at this possible knee jerk reaction to the problem of having a large plot of land that will not bring in enough income from tenant farming to justify the £5.3 million purchase price and cannot be sold due to it making a loss.

On 6th May 2016 we received an email from the Leader of Shepway District Council, Cllr David Monk, stating that he 'will today announce the Council's intention to bid for a garden town in the area surrounding Otterpool Manor Farm.' He went on to say that the development 'gives us an unmissable opportunity to deliver much needed homes and jobs, in a great setting that's already well connected'.

We understand that the development could see up to 12,000 houses built on an area that currently contains mainly agricultural land, small rural villages, isolated dwellings and an industrial park. It also encompasses the previously operating Folkestone Racecourse. In 2013 an application was made for 800 houses to be built on the site of the privately owned racecourse which was rejected by Shepway Council. Further an application for 250 houses on Lympe airfield site was also rejected. This decision was further upheld on an appeal in 2014 by Christina Downs, Government Planning Inspector who said; 'I consider that there is no overriding requirement for a development of this size within this location. The appeal proposal would have serious and harmful consequences, especially in terms of the environmental dimension of sustainability....my overall conclusion is that they would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse impacts....in the circumstances I conclude that the appeal scheme would not be a sustainable form of development.'

We ask you what has changed since 2014 to make this new proposal a 'sustainable form of development'?

We, along with neighbouring parishes, were invited to a meeting on 7th June to 'discuss' the proposal. We were entertained by a speech from Dr Susan Priest, Corporate Director, Operations, Shepway District Council who outlined how much we, our children and successors would benefit from having a town of 12,000 houses built between Hythe & Ashford. She spoke of how excited she was by this proposed development and when one Parish Councillor suggested that the feeling was not mutual for the residents whose homes would be blighted and lives affected over the next 30 years she seemed surprised. Then was the turn of the Leader, Cllr Monk, who upon being asked if sufficient people were against this development would it go ahead, confirmed that it would happen whatever the will of the local people. He initially refused a request for a show of hands in favour of the development but was pressed and it was no surprise that no hand was raised. There were approximately 30 Parish Councillors in the room representing not only Saltwood but also neighbouring parishes of Sellindge, Stanford, Postling and Lympe.

The 'summary' of this meeting has since been circulated which gives a sanitised and unrepresentative account of the nature and tone of the meeting. What the account failed to do was to convey the widespread distrust that was created by the secrecy and obfuscation of the Council and the universal opposition that Parish Councillors had towards this proposed development.

On reading the minutes from the subsequent Cabinet meeting none of the points raised at the Parish meeting seem to have been taken into account and regrettably there was a unanimous vote to make an expression of interest. The message this sends is of a 'process of listening' to the Parish Council but not actually accepting the validity of their comments.

In your own published criteria for support of an application of interest you state that 'expressions should set out how the local community is being engaged...to help win local support.' We can reliably inform you that this has not been done at any level. We feel it would now be hard for the Council to 'win' any local support if this scheme goes ahead as not engaging even the Parish Councils at this level sends out a very clear message to residents.

We do recognise that local development has to occur and that an increase in housing stock is required but a development on this scale and the impacts on the surrounding area is too intensive. The 2011 census reports average household size of 2.3 people per household. 12,000 new homes would bring 27,600 new residents to the area – double the size of the nearest town of Hythe and swallowing up smaller villages such as Sellindge and Lympe. We assume that many of these new residents will want to access facilities in Hythe that are already over stretched. We have a swimming pool that is literally falling down and a Council that don't seem to be able to make a straight decision on replacing it.

We quite rightly feel concerned about what impact these extra 27,600 residents will have on our already struggling hospital in Ashford, or on the few local secondary schools that the children will have access to. Are Shepway to fund a new hospital and secondary school to cope with these extra residents?

Cllr Monk tells us that 'These ambitious proposals directly respond to the priorities of the Council's Corporate Plan which includes a commitment to Shepway residents enjoying a healthy, prosperous lifestyle and benefiting from high quality and affordable housing by making sure new homes are built in the district and by developing a sustainable and vibrant local economy.' And 'The existing community will benefit from improved access to local services, environmental improvements to existing villages and investment in infrastructure such as local roads and sewerage, and access to more local job opportunities.'

How will a development on such a large scale help us to enjoy a healthy and prosperous lifestyle? Where will these local job opportunities come from? There is simply no evidence in their proposal to demonstrate these claims. The site map shows approximately 600 hectares that we are being told will accommodate 80 hectares of light industrial land, a large car park for the station, 12,000 houses, schools, shops etc and 30% green space.

We are also told that 'Shepway's current Core Strategy plans to deliver 8,000 new homes during the plan period from 2006 – 2026', surely this plan will over deliver that strategy by quite some number, and that is disregarding any other smaller scale development in the area which have already occurred or are planned to occur before 2026.

In summary, we feel that this expression of interest does not have the interests of the residents of Shepway at its heart and has been ill prepared and rushed through under a veil of secrecy to avoid difficult questions. The lack of 'engagement' makes us highly suspicious, both about whether the correct implementation and adherence to current requirements in our democratic process have been followed up until now; and, as a natural consequence, how the necessary future consultations will be conducted.'

Yours sincerely

David Kenyon-Vaughan
Chair, Saltwood Parish Council

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