

## **SELLING PARISH COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held at Selling Village Hall on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2025 at 7.00pm**

**Present:** Cllr Kevin Hobson (Chair), Cllr Andy Day (Vice-Chair), Cllr Andrew Bowles, Cllr Garry Evans, Cllr Sue Henderson (from agenda item 4), Cllr Sally King, Cllr Jonnie Reeves, Bex Ratchford (Clerk)

**Public:** 2

**1. Election of Chair and declaration of acceptance of office**

Cllr Hobson was elected as Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

**2. Election of Vice-Chair and declaration of acceptance of office**

Cllr Day was elected as Vice-Chair and signed the declaration of acceptance of office.

**3. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Gould (SBC) due to workload.

**4. Declarations of interest**

Cllrs had no interests to declare.

**5. Chair's Annual Report 2024-25**

This had been covered at the Annual Parish Meeting.

**6. Minutes of the meeting held on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2025**

The minutes were **agreed** as an accurate record of the meeting and were signed and dated by the Chair.

**9. Presentation from Cllr Terry Thompson (SBC) regarding Forest Connectivity**

This item was brought forward at the discretion of the Chair.

Forest connectivity is a plan to reconnect ancient woodland in order to create one large forest. Several groups are currently involved – Kent Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, Kent Reptile and Amphibian Group and the RSPB – and it is hoped to get support from Swale Borough Council, Ashford Borough Council and Canterbury City Council, as well as parish councils. Maps were circulated showing current woodland and areas of potential planting, as well as potential National Landscape (formerly AONB) areas. The proposal could be amended to remove sections if they cause issues with landowners and/or councils. Areas could be purchased or leased if appropriate. Most areas are currently arable land. It is hoped to apply for circular routes with signage in time. As the proposal involves changing some boundaries, a presentation is being put together for National Landscapes in July. It was noted that the historical plan for a reservoir would not be impeded by the proposal. Funding would come from grants, biodiversity net gain receipts from planning applications, carbon credits and environmental land management

schemes. Those involved have no commercial interest in the project. Landowners are being consulted with individually. It was **agreed** to write a letter in support of the project in principle, although Cllr Bowles abstained from the vote. **Action 1: Clerk to write letter in support.**

## 7. Clerk's report

- a. Action 1: planning comment submitted.
- b. Action 2: planning comment submitted.
- c. Action 3: planning comment submitted.
- d. Action 4: planning comment submitted.
- e. Action 5: planning comment submitted.
- f. Action 6: headteacher written to.
- g. Action 7: report will be circulated in the next few days.
- h. Action 8: KALC membership will be renewed once the fee is paid.
- i. Action 9: ID documents sent to Unity Trust Bank; agenda item 16b.
- j. The new UMS certificate has been provided and sent to the energy supplier, with a resulting backdated credit of £256.10.
- k. The ink contract may not be sufficient for the amount of printing and may need to be increased. **Action 2: Clerk to review as necessary.**
- l. All defibrillators and pads have been checked and are in working order.
- m. The internal audit was booked and has been completed; agenda item 16c.
- n. Four donations from residents of Selling Court have been received towards the new lanterns, totalling nearly half the cost; thank you letters and emails have been sent.
- o. The light at Neames Forstal was reported by the contractor as having been hit by a vehicle; this was confirmed by Cllr Hobson. **Action 3: Clerk to arrange repair and investigate possible insurance claim as appropriate.**

## 8. Reports from borough and county councillors

There was nothing to report.

## 10. Public session

Residents raised issues as follows:

- the council was asked to pay for more police surgeries in the village hall.
- PC Tancock had provided a report – there were no items of note in Selling during April.

## 11. Review of policies and other annual arrangements

- a. Code of Conduct – reviewed and approved.
- b. Standing Orders – this was deferred to the next meeting.
- c. Financial Regulations – this was deferred to the next meeting.
- d. Complaints Policy – this was deferred to the next meeting.
- e. Publication Scheme – this was deferred to the next meeting.

**12. Committees and election of representatives**

It was **agreed** to continue with no standing committees. It was **agreed** that Cllr Bowles and Cllr King would continue as the representatives to the KALC Swale Area Committee and there would be no representative to the SBC Eastern Area Committee. It was **agreed** that Cllr Hobson would be the representative to the SBC Parish Councils Liaison Forum and Community Speedwatch, for which more volunteers are needed. It was **agreed** that Cllr Henderson would continue as the representative to the Village Hall Committee.

**13. Meeting dates**

Meeting dates for the year were set as:

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> July

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> September (to replace the normal August and September meetings)

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> October

Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> November

Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December

Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> January

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> February

Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> March

Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> April

Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> May

**14. Insurance**

The insurance arrangements for 2025-26 were confirmed as part of a three-year long-term agreement.

**15. Police surgeries**

It was noted that five people attended the last surgery at the village hall. It was felt that holding the surgeries free of charge and at different locations and times would be sensible. It was also felt that the PC should not be responsible for arranging or paying for the surgeries. The benefits and drawbacks of using the Sondes were discussed and Cllr Reeves offered to personally fund one or two more sessions at the village hall if agreed. It was noted that the VHC would not offer free sessions. It was **agreed** to support surgeries in principle and to help with advertising, but not to fund sessions at the village hall. **Action 4: Clerk to inform PC Tancock.**

**16. Finance**

a. The financial statement and bank reconciliation were reviewed and accepted.

Account	Balance as of 30/04/25
Current account	11,887.49
Reserve account	10,007.64
<b>Total</b>	<b>21,895.13</b>

- b. Both the savings and current accounts with Unity Trust Bank are now open and the clerk and Cllrs Hobson, Bowles, Evans, King and Reeves have logged in successfully. **Action 5: Cllrs Day and Henderson to log in.** A 'partial switch' will be effected as a full switch cannot be done as some cheques remain outstanding on the NatWest account. This will move all standing orders and direct debits to the new account but not the balance. **Action 6: Clerk to write letter requesting transfer of funds and closure of NatWest accounts as and when necessary.**
- c. Internal audit
- The internal auditor has completed the relevant section of the AGAR with no concerns but no further report was available.
  - Due to a lower rate and the provision of a separate report, it was **agreed** to appoint Lionel Robbins as the internal auditor for 2025-26, subject to his availability. **Action 7: Clerk to contact Mr Robbins.**
- d. AGAR
- The Statement of Internal Control was reviewed and signed.
  - The Annual Governance Statement was reviewed and signed.
  - The Accounting Statements were approved and signed. **Action 8: Clerk to publish AGAR and submit to Mazars.** The period for the exercise of public rights will be 3<sup>rd</sup> June to 14<sup>th</sup> July.
- e. The end of year budget report was reviewed and accepted. It was noted that the difference between budgeted and actual income and budgeted and actual expenditure was due mainly to the receipt and expenditure of s106 money and the final balance was a deficit of £936.11.
- f. Payments were **agreed** as follows, to be made along with those approved at the previous meeting once the Unity account has funds available:

Ref	Payment	Net	*VAT	Total	Auth
D/D	SSE – energy supply (Apr)	-	-	-	
S/O	Bex Ratchford – salary and office rental	754.40	-	754.40	GE, SK
7	Bex Ratchford – expenses (mileage and ink)	34.84	1.75	36.59	GE, SK
8	Cllr Kevin Hobson – APM refreshments	94.45	-	94.45	GE, SK
9	Selling Village Hall – hall hire for police surgery	12.00	-	12.00	GE, SK
10	Selling Village Hall – grounds maintenance	80.00	-	80.00	GE, SK
11	Streetlights – maintenance payment 1 of 4	46.40	9.28	55.68	GE, SK
12	Vision ICT – SSL certificate	50.00	10.00	60.00	GE, SK
13	Zurich – insurance	357.34	-	357.34	GE, SK
14	Martin Thomas – internal audit	180.00	-	180.00	GE, SK

\* VAT to be reclaimed

## 17. Planning

There were no planning issues to discuss.

## 18. Reports from parish councillors

Cllr Bowles is attending a KALC meeting tomorrow and a meeting of the Church Buildings Trust should be held soon.

Cllr King is attending the Community Rail Network AGM soon and reported that KALC is sending out a learning and development survey. Kent Landscapes is providing a series of walks and talks about new nature reserves.

Cllr Evans reported that the paperwork for the PRow designation was submitted and accepted but now needs to be resubmitted with the path redrawn. Another resident has provided a witness statement. Kent Partnership has cut the path back recently.

## **19. Correspondence**

All correspondence was noted.

- a. An email regarding the decision on planning application 25/500968 (Rhode Common Barn) had been received and responded to.
- b. An email regarding the upcoming analogue phone switch off will be discussed at a later date if appropriate.
- c. An email about bike racks at the station had been received and responded to and will be revisited if the funding from Network Rail is forthcoming.
- d. A meeting with SBC on Local Government Reorganisation on 5<sup>th</sup> June will be attended by the clerk and Cllr Reeves.
- e. An email regarding the speed limit in Hogbens Hill will be discussed at a later date if appropriate.
- f. A Kent Police survey on area priorities had been responded to by Cllr Hobson.
- g. KALC is offering training on Local Government Reorganisation which is currently fully booked but more sessions should be made available soon.

## **20. Close and date of next meeting**

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.

**The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2025 at 7.00pm.**

Signed.....

Date.....