

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held at Selling Village Hall on Thursday 24th April 2025 at 7pm

Present: Cllr Kevin Hobson (Chairman), Bex Ratchford (Clerk), Sophie Day (Kent Police) and 12 members of the public including five parish councillors.

1. Welcome

All were welcomed to the meeting and Sophie Day, the Fraud Prevention Coordinator from Kent Police was introduced.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Rev. Peter Newell and PC Tancock, who had both sent written reports.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 25th April 2024

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

4. Presentation by Sophie Day on Fraud Awareness

In 2023 fraud cost the UK £219 billion, including £8.3 billion to individuals. Fraud accounts for over 40% of reported crime but it is estimated that only 13% of fraud is reported, likely due to shame and victim blaming. One in three victims become repeat victims, as they are seen as easy targets, often have diminished confidence and can be trying to recover their money. The three main types of fraud are telephone, internet devices or at the front door.

Telephone fraud is the most common. Fraudsters pretend to be from trusted organisations, will have basic information about the victim and will often elicit fear. The three key things to remember are **ABC** – never **A**ssume, never **B**elieve, always **C**onfirm. When confirming, call back, using an alternative phone number if possible. If relating to banking, call 159 for a central line for bank fraud teams. If a call is unexpected it is best not to answer as a genuine caller will leave a voicemail. There has been an increase in courier fraud where a caller pretends to be from the police and asks the victim to withdraw money which they will then come and collect. It was asked how much impact the switch over from analogue to digital telephone lines will have and thought not to be significant.

In email and text fraud, fraudsters again pretend to be from trusted organisations and will provide a link to click on, which should be avoided. Emails can be reported by forwarding to phishing@gov.uk and text messages to 7726. Online fraud is often through social media so check account privacy settings. Online is an easy way in for companionship fraud and charity scams. Be aware of fake news items and fake videos. Don't reuse passwords and make sure email accounts have particularly strong passwords. Use two-factor identification if possible and use www.haveibeenpwned.com to check if an email address has been involved in a data breach.

Identity theft is where your information can be used against you. Check credit reports regularly and consider using Cifas protection (which incurs extra checks) if you are particularly at risk. Report fraud to Action Fraud, which is a national organisation but details can be sent to the local police if investigation is possible. If unsure, call Kent Police on 101.

Doorstep fraud usually comprises an offer of services. Advice is to say no and always get three quotes from trusted tradespeople (Trading Standards is a good source). Never pay in full until the work has been completed. Consider installing a video doorbell to act as a deterrent and give the option of not answering. Kent Police send out regular alerts through My Community Voice.

Questions were asked regarding fake QR codes (quishing) on parking meters, EV charging points and in parcels. Advice is to not use QR codes if they are in a public place or if the source is unclear. Examples were shown of fake videos of celebrities 'endorsing' scams such as bitcoin.

Thanks were expressed to Sophie for the informative presentation.

5. Annual report of the Chair of the parish council

The Chair read out the report; see attached. It was asked whether the speed guns used by Community Speedwatch are issued by the police and how often they are calibrated. They are issued by the police and are calibrated before each session. The speeding figures were noted. It was also noted that the defibrillator at Perry Wood has been used once.

6. Draft Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st March 2025

It was noted that as the turnover was over £25,000 the council will be subject to external audit and also noted that some of the figures from last year have been restated due to errors. The balance at the start of the year was £16,209, receipts have been £28,689 and payments have been £32,113, leaving a closing balance of £12,785. The budgeted expenditure was £17,103 and actual expenditure was £29,098. The budgeted income was £17,103 and the actual income was £28,162. Both differences were due mainly to s106 money received and spent. The final balance was a deficit of £936.11. Copies of the accounts were requested and it was noted that they will be available to view during the period of exercise of public rights.

7. Reports from village groups

- a. Selling Primary School – Cllr Hobson provided a verbal report as Chair of Governors. There are 198 pupils on roll, with space for 20-30 more. There are five classes (Year R, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6) with five teachers and at least five teaching assistants. The percentage of SEND (special educational needs and disabilities) is 24%. As only 18 pupils come from Selling, and the rest from Faversham, Ashford, Canterbury, Herne Bay and other areas, this creates many car journeys, although car sharing is encouraged. A bus is provided from Neames Forstal; the footpath is not used. Highlights from the last year include the provision of the minibus (funded by donations and fundraising), and organising the clear up of the car park. Music provision is good, as is sport, with two separate football teams.
- b. St Mary the Virgin, Selling – the clerk read out the report; see attached.
- c. Selling Village Hall – the Chair read out the report; see attached.
- d. 1st Selling Brownies – the clerk read out the report; see attached.
- e. Kent Police – figures for the year for the whole ward (Boughton and Courtenay) had been provided. June had the most crimes at 47, the highest type of crime was violence and sexual assault at 39.5% (132 crimes).
- f. There were no other reports.

8. Reports from Borough and County Council representatives

There were no representatives present.

Questions and comments were invited from residents. It was commented that the village hall is a major community asset and should be supported. The parish council was asked to continue paying for police surgeries at the village hall. It was noted that there was no report from the cricket club, although relations are improving and there is a match on Sunday which residents were encouraged to attend.

Thanks were expressed to Mrs Bowles for providing refreshments and the meeting closed at 8.54pm.

Signed

Date