Draft minutes of the 122nd Annual Parish Meeting of Wormshill

**held in the Village Hall on Wednesday April 15th 2015**

**at 6pm**

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**Present:-** Simon Bass (chair), Jane Bass (recording secretary), Rosina Gunn (vice chairman), Jeremy Leigh Pemberton, Virginia Leigh Pemberton, Valerie Hemsley-Flint, Joan Lewis, Hilary Nightingale, David Hill, Sandra Beatty, Kevin Shilling, Patrick Phillips, Rosemary Smith, Susan Smith, Beryl Gibbard, John Nightingale, Thomas Nightingale

**In attendance:-** Cllr Daphne Parvin, Maidstone Borough Council,

1. **Apologies**

Cllr Jenny Whittle was unable to attend but had sent a report, copies of which had been provided and would be discussed later in the meeting.

**1. Introduction to the meeting and election of Chairman for 2015/2016**

The chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The first task was to elect a chairman for the following year. John Nightingale proposed and Rosina Gunn seconded the proposal that Simon Bass be chairman for the year and there being no other proposal, this was supported unanimously by the meeting.

**2. Choice of Vice-Chairman**

The chairman asked if anyone was interested as standing as vice-chairman. He explained that the duties were not onerous but that it would be helpful to have a deputy to assist if the need arose. Rosina Gunn volunteered that she would be prepared to take the role on. She was proposed by Simon Bass and this was seconded by Sandra Beatty. The proposal was approved unanimously.

**3. The Parish meeting**

The chairman welcomed Daphne Parvin to the meeting as borough councillor. He added that the Police had also been invited although he had not yet heard from them and was unsure if they would attend. If they did the agenda order may be amended to allow them to return to duty.

**4. Minutes of the 121st Meeting held on April 9th 2014**

Draft minutes had been circulated to those attending the meeting in 2014 and the chairman stated that there had been no amendments requested. Copies of the minutes were made available in the hall and the meeting authorised the chairman to sign them as a correct record.

1. **Updates by Kent Police and neighbourhood watch**

In the absence of the police, Patrick Phillips was invited to give the meeting an update on Neighbourhood watch. He started by saying that he only had a few words to say as little had occurred – he had not been notified by anyone of anything that had happened so had nothing to report. David Hill’s garage had been broken into recently and the question asked was whether there was any point in reporting this sort of event. You get a crime number but no other response. Patrick will circulate information if there any more such occurrences. The following specific comments were also made:-

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1. David Hill – a full moon and dry ground often led to break-ins
2. John Nightingale added that Darren Manzer had had many break-ins with serious equipment used and he had given up reporting them – he would email Patrick so that a record can be kept, although Patrick pointed out that he was not the policeman here and the police should really do the recording
3. Patrick pointed out messages from the police to remember, eg, eg shoulder surfing at ATMs or account numbers & PIN numbers being asked for over the phone. The criminals may stay on phone so that if you phone your bank, they will appear to respond to the call but it is really the criminals. You should wait before phoning your bank. You should also be wary of people offering to repair your roof and be wary of accepting such offers unless you know the workers. Lyssa had also come across a car of 4 women “looking for a toilet” – were “going to knock on door to ask if could use loo” – we need to be suspicious of such behaviour.
4. Patrick goes to meetings with police but he seem little value to these meetings. The police think it important to meet but it seems to be that figures can be “improved” by transferring crime from one designation to another.
5. He asked for more email addresses and can send a blind copy to maintain privacy. The information will be in the Parish news but will also be 6 weeks old by then.
6. The chairman said that there is a page on the village website available for Neighbourhood Watch.
7. Valerie Hemsley-Flint said that after a storm, had had builder to quote – a young man knocked on the door to ask her if he could do work and he tried to get in her house. She had the phoned police & wanted to ask other vulnerable people in village to do them same.
8. Someone had seen people parked outside a house early one morning and had asked them what they were doing and replied they were a) “a birdwatcher” who doesn’t know what an ornithologist is….and b) a police officer – this one turns out to be one from another county. We all need to be aware!
9. **Parish accounts**

The chairman reminded the meeting that it was an ‘Annual Parish Meeting’ rather than a formal parish council since as soon as a precept was levied, it would also be necessary to have the accounts audited. This would incur otherwise avoidable expenditure. As Wormshill is a relatively small village with no obvious reason at present to raise a precept it had previously been agreed to remain in our current position and he saw no reason to change that at present. The chairman stated that he would be returning the short form, as required, for the year ended March 31st 2015 to the Audit Commission; the short form declaring that there had been no income and no expenditure during the year. The balance in the bank (Santander) was unchanged at £504.93. The meeting again supported the position of remaining a Parish Meeting rather than becoming a Council and approved the action of the chairman as regards the accounts.

1. **Village website**

This was up and running. Councillors Parvin & Whittle’s addresses were available on is. Parishoners could also contact the chair by phone or email if they want anything added.

1. **Village charities**

The Chairman reminded the meeting of the two village charities and their purposes.

The is Mary and Harriett Shornden charity is for the benefit of residents of the Parish of Wormshill. It meets its objectives through making a Christmas gift to a number of elderly residents of the Parish.

The Poor’s Land Charity is 'for the children of persons resident in the Parish of Wormshill’. It meets its objectives through the provision of educational materials or support to children and young people who are residents of the village. It has done this in the past by providing dictionaries or similar to those moving from primary to secondary education but in view of the widespread use of the internet for such purposes, the trustees considered that it needed to consider how it could achieve its objectives in a more contemporary manner. Accordingly, it was thinking of writing to the young people concerned asking them what they thought might be appropriate. Trustees would obviously retain control so that such gifts remained appropriate.

The trustees aim to maintain a list of those they believe eligible for both charities but are always happy to receive new applications which they will consider at their next meeting.

Six trustees were required under the trust deed of which there were currently four - himself by virtue of being the Chairman of the annual Parish Meeting, Nicola Billing, Kevin Shilling and Ian Phillips. Jeremy Leigh Pemberton and Hilary Nightingale had now stood down and Ima Rix had moved out of the village.

If there were any volunteers to be a trustee then the Chairman welcomed them to contact himself. The trustees meet twice a year and it is not very time consuming role.

The accounts were circulated to the meeting and the Chairman took people through the main points.

***Poor’s Land Charity***

This had received dividends on its investments of £287.93 in the year to 31 December 2014 and had made no gifts in the year so had a surplus of the same amount for the year, which was held in the current account. The total book value of the charity was £5,855.92 of which £5,000 was held in the Charity Official Investment Fund managed by CCLA. The market value of these funds was £7,540.

***Mary and Harriett Shornden charity***

This had received dividends on its investments of £278.77 in the year to 31 December 2014 but had spent £350.00 on Christmas gifts so had a small deficit of £71.23 for the year. The total book value of the charity was £4,066.26 of which £3,846.66 was held in the Charity Official Investment Fund. The market value of these funds was £7,300.

The chairman stated that the accounts had yet to be audited but this would be done shortly.

Valerie Hemsley-Flint asked whether it was appropriate asking 11yr olds what they wanted? A limit was needed and consideration required as what would be appropriate. The chairman replied that it would be up to eg £50 and with suggestions of suitable gifts made. The objective was to make sure it is appropriate for the individual, within the constraints of something to remember the village by.

She also pointed out that it may be more appropriate to consider a gift when going to tertiary education instead. The trustees promised to consider this point.

1. **Village Hall Management Committee update**

Joan Lewis updated parishoners regarding the village hall events and the maintenance and upkeep over the last year

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The committee took the decision over the last year to hold a regular event. These had had a mixed response however. They had held a Spring Supper, an afternoon tea on May, a 2nd film night - which had unfortunately made a loss – a tea in July, children’s activities in Aug, and in September had hoped for fair with the PCC but this was downgraded to a fund raising activity at which £344 had been raised. In October a litter pick took place; in November a quiz and curry evening was held – again not with great support and in December a Christmas party where only one set of tickets had been sold.

In the hall, the toilet windows had been replaced and outside woodwork repaired and repainted. There was a small section where bees were which still had to be done. The fascia and soffits had been replaced. Each piece of work had cost over £1000. The insurance was also over £1,000. The committee can’t sustain losses over any period of time and expenditure had been £2,200 short of income. There are only 4 committee members at present – we feel a lack of support and can’t continue at this level.

We had a brilliant opportunity with ‘Stepahead’. This was supported by KCC and was a youth club for rural communities supporting children aged 11 and over and was based in Wormshill. However, no children had attended at all. It would have funded a large slice of the costs of the hall. It has now gone to Hollingbourne.

Outside bookings are the main support – especially Duke of Edinburgh bookings. Joan asked all to please pass a message on to friends and neighbours – we need to keep the community alive and village hall activities are a way of doing it.

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The Spring Supper was this Saturday. Approximately 25 were coming this year - it used to be 65. Patrick Phillips commented that Bredgar had not much support this year either for their Spring Supper.

David Hill was involved with Milsted village hall and this seems to thrive. He felt it was marketed differently - as a space available to anyone to use, eg for yoga, nursey etc. The chairman said that this was not dissimilar to Wormshill, where it was used by cubs, scouts, woodturners, overnight for camping by D of E attendees etc

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John Nightingale wanted to acknowledge the fantastic work of the committee in getting the state of the hall improved – it looked very good! He knew that finances were a struggle but felt that we were in an incredibly strong position to ask for grants. He was happy to help write letters to grant giving charities. The D of E activities would help “tick boxes” for these. It was important to get the community to join in - perhaps there was an opportunity with Bicknor, for example, who don’t have a hall. Could we do things jointly? E.g. a film night – a ink up with other parishes to come here.

Joan Lewis commented that it was an advantage for Bredgar and Milsted that they had parish councils with a precept for funding. David Hill added that Milsted had had a big grant which helped and helped them on the weddings front.

The chairman asked how we could best to advertise and what others outside the five parishes do? It was up to us to support events - perhaps we could do more leafletting.

Joan Lewis said there were two events planned, afternoon tea & games on Sunday 31st May and a Quiz & curry night on 14th November. Thought was also being given to a Beetle drive in the autumn as well as a summer event. She added that that the hall is available for bookings – not everything needs to be organised by the management committee!

David Hill said that Harrietsham had had 40 people at a whist drive – how do they manage it? He also pointed out that whilst Milsted had a horticultural society of c70 members, only about 1/3 were active. This reflected changes in society. Nonetheless Milsted had held an extravaganza - how did they manage it? It was pointed out that they had both a school and a nursery.

John Nightingale asked if there was benefit in a joint meeting of village hall committees of the five parishes to plan activities for benefit of all? David Hill said that booking requests could be transferred if one hall was already booked.

Valerie Hemsley-Flint gave thanks to Joan Lewis and the committee as she and her friends love the events. St Mary’s Sittingbourne have craft days with woodcarvers and other groups who pay for stands and sell goods. A barn dance was successful too and Bredgar has had one too.

Kevin Shilling asked who the other members of the village hall committee were - these were Jane Bass and Sue Clark

The chairman advised that the Village Meeting can appoint two members and Joan Lewis and Sandra Beatty agreed to stand. He concluded that we need another royal wedding or more elections as we are paid as a Polling Station.

1. **Planning matters**

The following applications had been made:-

* Blacksmiths Cottage
* Saywell Farm (as last year).
* Norwood Farm holiday accommodation application (received that day)

The chairman felt that he had no democratic mandate to comment and therefore it was more appropriate for individuals to comment. However, John Nightingale pointed out that the he does have mandate to respond as he has been voted as chairman and can be voted out next year if the meeting doesn’t agree with his actions. The chairman accepted this point and would therefore comment on applications if necessary in future.

It was also pointed out that many people miss these applications and it would be good for the chair to publicise them. If they were particularly contentious issue he could the convene a meeting. The chairman accepted these points and promised to put them on the village website and notice board. Nina would also put them up if emailed through.

1. **Village correspondence**

The following items of correspondence had been received.

* 1. Mid Kent Downs Steering Group. They had previously met at the village hall but this had not been booked again. Cllr Parvin said they had stayed here out of but the venue had been changed as travelling here was sometimes difficult in winter, John Leigh -Pemberton had come to talk at latest meeting and an outing to his business was planned . The meeting later in the year may come back here.
	2. AONB draft management plan
	3. A letter on affordable rural housing
	4. Local government boundary commission comments
	5. KCC minerals etc plan
	6. Healthwatch patients voice
	7. A moped loan scheme
	8. Junction 8 development scheme over which the chairman would write if anyone had a view. Cllr Parvin commented that the official borough view was no, but that the submissions had been changed and resubmitted. The borough had spent a lot of money fighting KIG. However, jobs needed in the area, therefore development will happen. Cllr Parvin added that the Leeds - Langley bypass would help - Parkwood is dying through poor transport links. It was possible that developer contributions (Section 106 money) from projects might help build it. John Nightingale added that the Junction 8 development is pertinenent to Wormshill therefore the chairman should write.
	9. An economic development meeting at MBC was attended but there was nothing that would affect Wormshill.
1. **Roads and road sweeping**
	1. Email from Jenny – tough yr for KCC – supported village
	2. SatNav update (see email…….) Artic stuck in Bedmonton Lane in the year. Damage to trees etc – and to lorries………..
	3. JN – pleased that village signs replaced and repaired. DH – John Edwards came & looked and did work. Road sweeping – little sweeper - still not cleaning the pavement outside church satisfactorily – v slippery. DH – lge roadsweeper dosent go to edge of tarmac.
	4. SCB has been in touch with council about pavement. For Kevin – Jenny W contacted about Draysfield – council had been up to look last yr and not seen it a risk (Councillor Ring). Pavements there v slippery too.
	5. Rds broken up over winter – anyone reported them? Edges crumbling – people reluctant to reverse now and drive on edges
2. **Village clean-up dates** –

 last Oct – two families, approx. 90mins. V gd support in terms of equipment from Borough Council. Dates? Kevin 9th/10th May – Sat morning. Coffee provided by village hall

1. **Trees and Woodlands –**

DH nothing to report – farmers reluctant to have any planted as hinders hedge cutting. Run out of space? SCB – any ash die back? JN – some on HBN Rd – hits young growth eg after cutting back

1. **Highways**

– covered above. DH – 6’ restriction for Bedmonton Lane at this end. DP – nothing at other end?

1. **Timing of future meetings**

The chairman asked the meeting whether the timing of future meetings would be better at 7pm in future as this would potentially allow parishoners to attend who found a 6pm start too difficult after work. Valerie Hemsley-Flint was not so keen on 7pm on Wednesday as she has to catch a bus on Thursday but we could hold future meetings on the Tuesday as this already varied. After a discussion it was agreed to hold the next meeting on a Tuesday at 7pm.

1. **Daphne Parvin**

Daphne Parvin asked to be allowed to say a few words. She gave thanks for the invite and said how lovely it was to see people come along. It is very difficult in many villages to get support for activities - even a buffet at an AGM the previous night at Hollingbourne didn’t get people in. Young people often out at work from early in morning to late. Perhaps a number of parishes could join together and have a big event rather than a number of smaller ones?. Wormshill is the only village of the five in her patch but she wasn’t sure what the other villages did in terms of an AGM.

She met the Stepahead leader at a meeting last night where there had been no children turning up for the youth club, but we had six children now! Grants for sports equipment could be made available by Daphne. Thomas Nightingale said he would use table tennis table if one were available!

After the May elections Maidstone BC would go back to old committee system and not stay with the cabinet approach– “backbench” councillors had felt that they had little impact on decisions, there were 55 who were not cabinet members. David Hill asked if they had any influence with police commissioners? Daphne Parvin said this was a KCC matter rather than a Borough one.

Councillor Parvin concluded by saying that this is her last year as next year the elections are due and as terms are four years she was going to step down. The Chairman of Bicknor will however hopefully stand next. We need someone to stand up for rural communities and he would be able to do it as she hoped she had done. The chairman and the meeting thanked Councillor Parvin for all her work and for her interest in rural communities, which had certainly been of help to Wormshill..

1. **Any Other Business**
	1. Valerie Hemsley-Flint pointed out a new signpost was needed this end of Bedmonton Lane – John Nightingale said he would try to get wooden one made.
	2. Valerie Hemsley-Flint also said the “bend” signs were missing between Yew Tree Farm & Park Farm as well as on other bends. The chairman promised to take this up with KCC.
	3. John Nightingale proposed a vote of thanks to the chairman and secretary!
	4. Sandra Beatty pointed out that clay and stones had been dumped in a corner of village hall field. John Nightingale responded that he had however had sorted this out – the gravediggers had been using a mini-digger. This was not good for the grass to bring the digger over. Susan Smith was concerned about the mess particularly in the rain if driving over grass and churchyard - a result of the funeral today.

With no other business, the meeting closed at 19:40.

If you would like anything else added do please contact me! Simon Bass, 01622 884233 / simon.bass1@btopenworld.com