



**Birchington Parish Council
General Purposes Committee
Minutes of the meeting held on Monday
17th February 2025 at 18.30 hrs
at the Parish Office, 2 Albion Road, Birchington**

Present:

Cllr Phil Fellows (Chairman)
Cllr Linda Wright
Cllr Colin Brown
Cllr Marcel Pooke

Cllr Nick Blankley – Observer
Cllr Jim Moore - Observer
Cllr Bob Prebble – Observer

Jane Bevan – Clerk

1 x Member of the Public

GP/2024/19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Max Houghton

GP/2024/20 Declarations of Interest

None

GP/2024/21 Chairman's Report and Public Participation

The Chairman said his report would be covered under the agenda items.

GP/2024/22 Update from Events Chairman

1. Volunteers Reception

Cllr Wright thanked everyone who helped at the recent volunteers evening. The event which cost £449.14. was a success with positive feedback received. Cllr Wright requested that the list of volunteers was updated regularly.

2. VE Day

Cllr Wright said that she had heard that the Bank Holiday on 5th May had been designated a street party day. If this was the case she suggested holding a street party on Dog Acre and closing part of Alpha Road near Dog Acre. Cllr Wright said that The Centre had been booked for a Veterans tea on 8th May 2025 and entertainment had also been booked. The beacon lighting would take place on the evening of 8th May. The Silver Band had been booked to play at the event.

Action:

**Cllr
Wright**

A member of the public, Alexandra Gilbert, made a presentation on the 130th anniversary of Station Road being a named road. The actual anniversary would be in October 2025 and the plan was for all traders to have a QR code in their windows where, once clicked on, the link would go to a website which would provide a history of the actual building. The Chairman thanked Alexandra for her presentation. GP/2024/23 Update from Health and Wellbeing Sub Group Chairman Cllr Brown reported that 4 meetings of the group had so far been held. He said one of the suggestions from the group was to encourage younger people to become more involved and possibly for the Council to offer a work placement at the Parish Office. He said another member was working on a sea walk along the coast at Minnis Bay. He said their Facebook page was progressing well and they were also developing an Instagram page. The group were also providing podcasts which had been well received. Cllr Brown said he was also working on an audio version of the Parish magazine. He also provided an update on Disability Awareness Birchington and said that the group had circulated posters to shops on Station Road to encourage the traders to make their premises more accessible for people with disabilities. GP/2024/24 Current Projects There was some discussion on the valuation of Library and further information had been requested by the valuer. The Clerk provided an update on the Memorial Recreation Ground and the number of football teams who were now playing there. Digital Transformation was discussed and it was reported that a meeting had recently been held with the Parish Council's IT provider who would be coming back with some proposals and recommendations with regard to personal laptops for members. Resilience was discussed and in the light of new information that TDC were responsible as first responders, the Parish Council's resilience document would be updated. GP/2024/25 Future Councillors/Staff Training The Chairman said it would be beneficial for Councillors to take advantage of training provided by KALC/NALC . The Clerk said she did forward training courses by KALC/NALC to all members but she would also raise the training issue at the forthcoming Parish Forum meeting. GP/2024/26 Birchington Library Covered under Current Projects above. GP/2024/27 Additional Parish Councillors Cllr Pooke presented a case for increasing the number of Parish Councillors. He said this would be driven by an increase in population if the proposed development went ahead. He said he had written to TDC to ask if the Parish Council could request an increase in the number of Parish Councils. He said he had proposed an increase of 3 to make the number of Councillors an uneven number so that decisions were reached when voted upon. The Chairman said it would be a long process involving either elections or co-options and needed to be thought through. Cllr Blankley said requesting an odd number of Councillors was irrelevant as an odd number could become an even number if a Councillor did not attend a meeting. He suggested that the amount of work required by Councillors should be quantified first and then it should be decided upon if there was justification for more Councillors. It was agreed to place this issue on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting. GP/2024/28 Public Engagement The Chairman referred to previous discussions about using the desk at the library for the	Clerk Clerk
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Deputy Clerk to deal with public enquiries and enabling the Clerk to work uninterrupted. Cllr Blankley said the library did not have the resources that the office had, and such a move would need to be thoroughly discussed. Following further discussion, it was agreed that the office should keep a daily tally of the number of visitors and the time spent in the office. The Parish Council's website was discussed and it was agreed to discuss further at the next Full Council with a view to upgrading the website. Cllr Brown asked for an update on live streaming of Full Council meetings. Cllr Blankley said there needed to be a policy and protocols in place. Following discussion it was agreed to place the item on the agenda for the next Full Council meeting. GP/2024/27 Suggestions for Future Projects. The Chairman asked if there had been a response to the call for volunteers for Speedwatch. The Clerk said there had been one response from the Parish Magazine article and two other people who had visited the Parish office had offered to volunteer. Cllr Wright said there needed to be at least eight volunteers so that adequate cover was provided. GP/2024/28 Date and Time of Next Meeting Monday, 31st March 2025 at 6.30pm in the Parish Council Office. The meeting closed at 8.35pm Signed by Parish Clerk Jane Bevan Dated: 5th March 2025	Clerk
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