

**MINUTES OF THE FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2024
IN CAPEL PARISH HALL**

- 1. IN ATTENDANCE:** Mrs Dale, Mr Ball, Mrs Schryver, Mr Cox, Mr Salter, Mrs Taylor, Mrs Watson, Mr Palmer, Mr Ransome and the Clerk.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Parish Councillor Mr McLachlan. District Councillors Mrs Malcomson.

IN ATTENDANCE: District Councillors Mrs Hobbs, Mr Wellman and Mrs Kirstie Havard. Mr William Harmsworth, Newdigate Parish Council, Mr Jason Wright, Ockley Parish Council, Mrs Joanna Harrington, Mr Paul Kennedy, The Good Shepherd Trust Academy, Mr James Baguley, Headteacher of The Weald School, Beare Green and 7 members of the public.

The Chair reminded all present of the Meeting Etiquette printed at the top of the agenda.

- 2 TO APPROVE THE ACCURACY OF MINUTES OF THE FULL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING 21 OCTOBER 2024**
The minutes were regarded as a true record of the meeting. All Councillors voted in favour of accepting the records and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

- 3 TO APPROVE ACCURACY OF MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING 4 NOVEMBER 2024**
The minutes were regarded as a true record of the meeting. All Councillors voted in favour of accepting the records and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

- 4 TO APPROVE THE ACCURACY OF MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING 4 NOVEMBER 2024**
The minutes were regarded as a true record of the meeting. All Councillors voted in favour of accepting the records and the minutes were signed by the Chair.

- 5 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**
None.

6 PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

The Chair agreed that Agenda Items (10) (Planning Application MO/2024/1323 and (11) (Scott Broadwood Infant School) on the agenda would be discussed at this point.

Agenda Item 10. Mr Jason Wright, representing Ockley Parish Council and an Ockley resident thanked Capel Parish Council for its support with a strong letter of objection regarding Planning Application MO/2024/1323 which Mole Valley has now refused. It was agreed that although the housing development is needed the walk from Ockley station into the village or to Capel is dangerous as there are no footpaths. Mr Wright reminded the meeting that there are still outstanding applications for the removal of conditions regarding the original planning application and combined support from both Parish Councils would be beneficial.

Mrs Harrington reminded the meeting that Ockley was without a GP surgery or school. Families need to travel to Capel for these services which means crossing the A24. There is now a possibility that the Capel school could close, with the nearest educational facility being located further away in Beare Green. Currently there is no bus link between Ockley and Capel, so private transport is essential.

Mr William Harmsworth from Newdigate Parish Council addressed the meeting, outlining the Trig Street project. This is for the upgrading of the footpath linking Beare Green and Newdigate. This project has been ongoing for several years, with finance and safety issues being the main concerns. Ibstock Bricks have now withdrawn from their site which is adjacent to the footpath. Ibstock had previously confirmed they would support the project, supplying broken bricks for the hardcore base. There are also issues with Surrey County Council Highways and Safety team regarding a route that is safe for all users. It was agreed that until definite information has been received from Ibstock and Surrey County Council, the project cannot move forward. The Clerk will contact Ibstock Bricks and Surrey County Council Highways and Safety team and ask for definitive information.

Agenda Item 11. Mr Paul Kennedy, Chief Executive officer of The Good Shepherd Trust supplied the meeting with information relating to the Scott-Broadwood Infant and Weald Primary School's Formal Consultation which had taken place in July 2024. The consultation asked for views and opinions on the amalgamation of the Capel school with The Weald at Beare Green. Mr Kennedy confirmed that a business case for the amalgamation of the schools was being forwarded to the Department of Education.

Mr Ball asked if Scott-Broadwood was being misinformed in that it would move. Mr Kennedy confirmed that nothing could be done until the Department of Education has decided.

Mr Ball asked if public opinion would be taken into consideration. Mr Kennedy said that all comments and opinions has been collated and were forwarded to the DoE with the business case.

Mrs Watson asked if any provision for transport was being considered. It was suggested that the transport problem would be addressed when the final decision is made.

Mr Palmer asked about parking, which is a problem along Newdigate Road. There were also concerns regarding the safety of pupils walking along the A24 from Beare Green. Mr Baguley suggested that a bid could be made for capital to address parking problems and safety along the A24 had been discussed with Surrey County Council Highways.

The question was asked that if the schools did amalgamate, would there be capacity in the future with new houses being proposed in the vicinity. Mr Kennedy said that Surrey Pupil Placements had confirmed a surplus of places up to 2032.

Mrs Dale asked if the building at The Weald was suitable for primary school children as it was originally built as a secondary school. Mr Baguley said that the classrooms were larger, with 2 portacabins located on site. Adequate space was available.

7. CLERKS REPORT:

- The Capel Sign, repainted courtesy of the St John's Art Group is now ready to be erected. There are concerns that because of the weight of the sign, it could fall again. Looking for a different location, possibly attached to a wall, could be a safer option.
- Treeline are scheduled to cut back the overhanging trees at the rear of 9 Bakers Way on 2 December 2024.
- A request has been made by a resident to install a bench adjacent to the footpath on Capel recreation ground. The bench would be sympathetic to the recreation ground, made out of locally felled timber. If permission is granted the resident will purchase and install the bench with no cost to the Parish Council.¹

8. MOLE VALLEY LOCAL PLAN:

No further information had been received regarding the Local Plan. It was agreed that Mr Garber will be invited to attend the December meeting and update the Councillors.

9. TO CO-OPT COUNCILLOR VACANCY – CAPEL WARD

Mr Peter Palmer and Mr Christopher Ransome had both attended the October meeting, and both had addressed the Council individually, stating why they would like to be considered for the position and what strengths they believed they would bring to the Council. Both candidates were duly co-opted and signed their Declaration of Acceptance and Register of Interest forms (Pecuniary Interests) and invited to join the Councillors at the Council table.

Mole Valley District Council will be advised of their co-options and their completed and signed Pecuniary Interest forms will be forwarded.

Mrs Dale, Chair of the Parish Council advised that she no longer meets the requirements to serve as a Councillor, as she no longer lives within 3 miles of the parish boundary. All Councillors agreed that it would be beneficial if Mrs Dale continued as Special Advisor to the Parish Council on matters relating to Footpaths, Bridleway and Byways and Acting Chairperson until the Annual Meeting in May 2025.

10. REMOVAL OF CONDITIONS – PLANNING APPLICATION MO/2024/1323 – LAND SOUTH OF COLES LANE, OCKLEY.

Please see the information in Agenda Item (6) Public Questions appertaining to this item.

¹ The Councillors agreed the installation of a bench.

11. SCOTT BROADWOOD CofE INFANT SCHOOL

Please see the information in Agenda Item (6) Public Questions appertaining to this item.

12. PALMERS FARM, NEWDIGATE ROAD, BEARE GREEN.

The Parish Council had been in discussion with Power Bespoke regarding the maintenance of the verge along Newdigate Road, Beare Green. The verge is owned by the Parish Council and has not been maintained. Power Bespoke representing the owner of Palmers Farm suggested an agreement be made whereby Palmers Farm take over the maintenance the verge, allowing unrestricted access to their fields. The Councillors have agreed that this area of land will now be included in the regular grounds maintenance scope of works. To keep the verge manageable, it will receive 4 cuts per year, during the growing season, at a cost of £104.00 per cut. All Councillors agreed the quotation and Power Bespoke will be informed of the Council's decision.²

13. MEREBANK POND, MEREBANK, BEARE GREEN

At the October meeting Mr Killick, Head Bailiff of Beare Green Angling Club addressed the meeting, outlining the condition of Merbank Pond and asked if the Parish Council would consider a grant to match fund the total clearance of Canadian pondweed. The Finance Committee and the Full Council agreed a grant but only if the approved contractor could give a time sensitive elimination guarantee and totally remove the weed from the area. Until that these conditions are met, the Parish Council will not approve the funding.

14. LAND ADJACENT TO SUNNYSIDE, 172 THE STREET, CAPEL.

The resident of 172 The Street had made a request to purchase the small parcel of common land adjacent to this property. Councillors agreed that it would be inappropriate for the village to lose any further common land, and unanimously agreed not to approve the purchase.

The Parish Council wanted it noted that they were very grateful to the current owner of 172 for maintaining this parcel of land over the past years. As there is now the possibility that 172 The Street being sold, the Council has now included this piece of land in the maintenance contract, so it receives regular attention.

15. PROPOSAL TO POST CAPEL DIGITAL MUSEUM ON PARISH COUNCIL WEBSITE

A Capel resident has suggested that he work on collating this historical information regarding the Parish and then have it posted onto the Parish Council website. The initial response from Councillors was positive, but a meeting between the historian and Councillor McLachlan will need to take place to ensure the information is appropriate for the website.

This is a long-term project, and no further information is expected until after Christmas.

16. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS:

(a) Finance

(i) To discuss and approve the precept for 2025/26

Mr Salter informed the Council that the Finance Committee had met on the 4 November and discussed the individual budget allocations necessary to recommend a precept request and made decisions on increasing and reducing allowances. It was agreed that the precept should be kept to a minimum, taking the cost of living into consideration, but ensuring that there will be adequate funds available to maintain commitments. An allocation of £127,010.00 was proposed. This is a slight increase of 2.8% and only slightly over inflation. Councillors were reminded that only the actual precept, Concurrent and Extra grant are used to determine the precept request. Any extra income received from the hall, burial ground, CIL payment or easements are not taken into consideration when deciding the requirement.

All Councillors agreed the Precept request for 2025/26 at £127,010.00 and the proposal was unanimously accepted.

(ii) To pass invoices for payment

Invoices to the value of £13,045.45 were passed for payment. The six-monthly direct debit for the PWLB payment had already been actioned. The Parish Council continues to honour its monthly donation to the Parish Magazine, and payments to HMRC regarding the Employers NIC continue to be made.

² All Councillors agreed to accept this quotation and include the extra maintenance in the current contract.

(iii) To agree, adopt and sign accounts to 18 November 2024

The accounts at the 18 November 2024 were confirmed –

Current Account - £379.46

Reserve Account - £119,481.78

NS&I Account - £610.89

With 4 months left in the current financial year, £37,000.00 remains in the budget. Acting carefully, the Council should end the year with about £80,000.00 in reserve.

(iv) Half year audit

The Clerk confirmed that the half-yearly audit had taken place that day. The accounts had been signed off as correct. Attention must be given to updating policies and procedures regularly and a timetable for these actions will now be made to ensure they are addressed at fixed intervals throughout the year.

The Use of Email Agreement Policy was updated at the meeting to include the newly co-opted councillors and will be posted on the website.

The Auditor asked for an update on the underpayments of Employers NIC for the for years 2021, 2022 and 2023. HMRC was contacted in November 2023 asking for confirmation of the amounts outstanding, but no information received. A further letter has now been forwarded to HMRC stating that this underpayment was unintentional due to employers allowance being claimed and erroneously being given. As soon as the mistake was realised, the Parish Council began making payments and will continue to do so. The Parish Council wishes to resolve this genuine oversight and awaits HMRCs advice.

(v) To approve and authorise payments of outstanding invoices:

Payment Received

Hall Hire **£58.50**

Payments

		VAT	TOTAL
Lindsay Quirk Hall Cleaning	£45.00		£45.00
Surrey Sports and Turf	£1,176.00	£235.20	£1,411.20
Helpdesq Invoice 17465 – Email security	£58.44	£11.69	£70.13
Helpdesq Invoice 17564	£32.94	£6.52	£39.11
Fred Evans Ditch clearing Capel and Beare Green	£2,095.00		£2,095.00
Clay Griffin Treework Capel	£1,900.00		£1,900.00
EDF Energy (Gas and Electricity)	£177.01	£8.85	£185.86
Coldharbour Sports and Social Club	£900.00		£900.00
J Russell November salary	£2,595.00		£2,595.00
HMRC Clerk's income tax	£648.60		£648.60
HMRC Employer's NIC	£343.01		£343.01
Capel and Beare Green magazine	£200.00		£100.00
PWLBB DD (Paid 8/11/24)	£2,712.54		£2,712.54
	£12,783.54	£262.26	£13,045.45

(b) Ward Matters for discussion

Beare Green – (i) Mr Cox asked when the repairs to the adult gym equipment would be actioned. The Clerk confirmed that Fresh Air Fitness had confirmed they did not have the spare part for the Air Skier in stock and the model has now been updated. The company is now going to replace the equipment with a whole new Air Skier for the same price. Stock is expected at the beginning of January and installation by mid-January. (ii) Mrs Watson mentioned that recently vans had been broken into and equipment stolen. She asked if a Neighbourhood Watch scheme could be initiated in Beare Green. The Clerk will contact Surrey Police and invite them to the December meeting.

- **Capel** – (i) Mr Ball asked if the grit bins were being replenished as very cold weather is being forecast. The Councillors were reminded that the Parish Council had part funded the upkeep of 2 bins in Capel; Bakers Way and Broadwood Cottages in July this year. (ii) Mrs Dale asked if any information regarding Warm Hubs could be posted on the notice board and in the Parish magazine. The following information has been posted –

- With winter fast approaching, Surrey County Council is again opening safe and friendly Warm Hubs for everyone in Surrey. For more information text **Hello Support 1 to 07577 716 833** to find your nearest Warm Welcome location or access more information on financial and welfare support.
- Looking for help to manage your increasing energy bills? Visit surreyenergyadvice.org.uk. If you don't have online access, call the community helpline on **0300 200 1008**.

17 CORRESPONDENCES:

An estimate has been received from Mr F Evans to upgrade the footpath leading up to Wolves Hill, on the left. The existing footpath is not fit for purpose and is widely used by Capel residents and walkers.

The estimate to upgrade the footpath, dig out, level the spoil, board and peg the sides, lay matting and infill with scalplings amounts to £2,985.00.

All Councillors agreed this is necessary work and unanimously agreed to accept the estimate.

18 URGENT MATTERS AT DISCRETION OF CHAIRMAN FOR NOTE OF INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA:

- **Surrey Police – Neighbourhood Watch Scheme**

Dates of Next Meetings –

Planning Committee: Monday 2 December 2024

Full Parish Council meeting: Monday 09 December 2024

Finance Committee: Monday 6 January 2025

All meetings will be held in Capel Parish Hall