

WALMER PARISH COUNCIL
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Dated this 25th day of November 2020

To All Councillors

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of WALMER PARISH COUNCIL to be held on
Wednesday 2 December 2020 via Zoom video conferencing at 7pm (waiting room opens at 6.30pm)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2245729770?pwd=OFB3WnFNMXY3SnF6Zk5mTUtBaVF2Zz09>

Meeting ID: 224 572 9770

Password: 294456

Phone (free of charge) 0203 695 0088

If you experience technical difficulties immediately prior to or during the meeting please call the office mobile on 07828 221924 and either the Admin Assistant or the Assistant Clerk will be able to help you.

Mrs Kirsty Holroyd
Clerk to the Parish Council

AGENDA

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members in respect of business to be transacted on the agenda.
3. **OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY**
To remind those present of the right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of the council, committees and sub committees.
4. **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT**
5. **MINUTES**
To approve the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 November 2020. **Attach 1**
6. **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA**
7. **QUESTIONS AND/OR OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ELECTORATE OF WALMER**
To agree to suspend the meeting for up to 15 minutes to allow discussion with members of the electorate of the Parish of Walmer present at the meeting.
8. **CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR REPORTS**
 - i) To receive any information from PCSOs and Community Wardens
 - ii) Monthly Surgeries: currently suspended

9. **PLANNING COMMITTEE**
To receive the report of the Chairman and the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 10 November 2020 **Attach 2**
10. **FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE**
To receive the report of the chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 **Attach 3**
11. **AMENITY AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**
i) To receive the report of the chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 18 November 2020 **Attach 4**
ii) To receive an update on the Granville Road project from DDC
12. **REPORT OF THE CLERK**
i) To receive and consider a report on local highways issues **Attach 5**
ii) Casual Vacancies - to receive an update and consider a closing date for applications
13. **FINANCIAL ISSUES**
To receive the report of the Responsible Financial Officer and consider payments and orders as detailed. **Attach 6**
14. **CORONAVIRUS UPDATE**
A new standing item to facilitate discussion and consideration of ways in which the Council can play a role locally during the on-going pandemic.
15. **PROPOSED OFFICE MOVE**
To receive the results of the public consultation. **Attach 7**
To receive and consider a report analysing the results of the public consultation **Attach 8**
To receive and consider the updated business plan **Attach 9**
To receive and consider a proposal to submit the borrowing approval application to MHCLG. **Attach 10**
16. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Wednesday 13 January 2021 at 7pm via Zoom.

DISCUSSIONS TO BE HELD IN CONFIDENCE

To receive and consider the first draft of the budget for 2021/22

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WALMER PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of Walmer Parish Council held on Wednesday, 4 November 2020 via Zoom Video Conference.

Present Councillors:

J Murray
M Eddy
P St Ange
D Thompson

Miss Herring
D Symons
B Pitcher

Mrs Beard-Gould
P Heath
Mrs Le Chevalier

Officer Present:

Mrs K Holroyd (Clerk)

Ms S Plews (Technical support)

6004. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies with reason were accepted from Cllr J Lonsdale

6005. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Heath declared a VAOI in item 15 ii) (reported here under minute 6018 ii) since he is a Director of the Chamber of Commerce.

6006. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

To remind those present of the following: -

The right to record, film and to broadcast meetings of the council, committees and sub committees is established following the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014. This is in addition to the rights of the press and public to attend such meetings.

While those attending meetings are deemed to have consented to the filming, recording or broadcasting of meetings, those exercising the rights to film, record and broadcast must respect the rights of other people attending under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Any person or organisation choosing to film, record or broadcast any meeting of the Council or a committee is responsible for any claims or other liability from them so doing.

6007. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Members received one nomination for the role of Vice Chairman of the Council for the remainder of 2020/21.

RESOLVED: that Cllr Eddy be appointed vice chairman of the Council for the remainder of 2020-21

6008. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr Murray reported that he has been in contact with a local builder who wishes to donate a small piece of land for the use of the Parish. Since there is a possibility the land could be used to install EV charging points, the project will be progressed by the CEWG.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

6009. MINUTES

Members considered the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 7 October 2020.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity.

6010. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE ON THE AGENDA

None

6011. QUESTIONS AND/OR OBSERVATIONS FROM THE ELECTORATE OF WALMER

Members agreed to suspend the meeting for up to 15 minutes to allow discussion with members of the electorate of the Parish of Walmer present at the meeting. All the comments concerned the proposed office move and the public consultation in particular. Questions centred on whether the public consultation had been carried out in line with government procedures and whether the results would be published. The chairman stressed that the council was following a process and advice had been taken to ensure due diligence.

The clerk noted the questions and comments and told residents she would respond over the following few days.

6012. CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR REPORTS

- i) Members were due to receive information from the PCSO and Community Warden but none had been received at the office
RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

- ii) Monthly Surgeries: currently suspended

6013. WALMER IN BLOOM

Members received the report of the Chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 20 October 2020. Referring to minute 1397 Cllr Mrs Le Chevalier reported that since the next meeting of the committee was not due to be held until January the Clerk would continue to report to full council on her discussions with KCC and DDC on the issue of debris on the road at the foot of Hawkshill Camp Road after heavy rainfall.

RESOLVED: members agreed to note.

6014. PLANNING COMMITTEE

- i) Members received the report of the Chairman and the minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 13 October 2020.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

- ii) Members received the report of the Chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 27 October 2020. Members were interested in the proposal at minute 4128 concerning contacting neighbouring councils to suggest the joint purchase of a piece of farmland to develop as a community woodland. A draft letter had been sent round to all councillors prior to the meeting. Concern was expressed over the potential and unknown costs of such a project, but Cllr Eddy stressed that the letter was designed to ascertain agreement in principle and the idea was at a very early stage.

RESOLVED: That the letter be sent to all neighbouring councils to ascertain interest in the joint project.

6015. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

- i) Members received the report of the chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 4 October 2020. Cllr Eddy wished to commend Cllr Mrs Le Chevalier on the production of the ethical banking report. It was noted that the Head of Assets and Building Control was due to attend the next meeting to discuss the grant for public conveniences in 2021-22 and the Clerk asked for all questions to be sent via her in advance. Cllr Heath noted the poor state of the toilets in Marke Wood.

Cllr Pitcher declared an interest in this item since he is a friend of the Astor Theatre. He did not speak or vote on this item.

RESOLVED:

i) That the grant of £38,737.99 be made to DDC in order to maintain the public conveniences for 2020-21

ii) That a grant of £1000 be made to the Astor Theatre to assist with the kitchen refurbishment.

6016. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Members received the report of the chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 22 October 2020. Cllr Heath enquired about the absence of minutes of the second half of the meeting which was conducted without a member of staff present. Cllr Mrs Le Chevalier asked why the salary review of two members of staff had been deferred and suggested that the issue be discussed at the next appropriate committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

- i) That the nationally agreed pay award of 2.7% be applied to all three members of staff.
- ii) That the Administrative Assistant be awarded two incremental steps on the pay scale.
- iii) That the salary reviews of the other two members of staff be discussed at the Finance and General Purposes meeting on 25 November 2020.

6017. CO-OPTION

Cllr Pitcher proposed that this item be moved to private session at the end of the meeting. Cllr Eddy seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED: That this item be discussed without members of the public present at the end of the meeting.

6018. REPORT OF THE CLERK

- i) Members received an update on key issues over the last three weeks. The Clerk informed members that several reports of speeding vehicles along Kingsdown Road had been received in the office, one of which had resulted in a minor collision. The PCSO has been informed and will arrange for an officer to attend with a speed indicator device as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

- ii) Members received a proposal from the Chamber of Commerce regarding Christmas Lights along The Strand. The Clerk had learned that day that the Chamber of Trade had managed to secure the hire of the scaffold for free and therefore the total cost for installing lights along the Strand would be £149.

RESOLVED: That the Council agrees to pay £149 to The Deal & Walmer Chamber of Trade to install lamppost lights along the Strand for Christmas.

- iii) Members considered whether the council would like to run the Christmas Lights competition this year.

RESOLVED: That the competition will take place and be publicised by the Assistant Clerk. Cllrs Mrs Le Chevalier and Thompson will be judges.

- iv) Members considered the purchase of a new laptop for home working. The Council's IT consultants had told the Clerk that the existing laptop is at the end of its useful life. Members considered whether all three members of staff ought to have a laptop in the interests of best practice.

RESOLVED: That three laptops be purchased at a total cost of £2061 for use by staff for home working and flexible working should the purchase of the new office go ahead.

6019. FINANCIAL ISSUES

Members received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer and considered payments and orders as detailed.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That payments dated 21 October 2020 be authorised as detailed below:-

Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Watering, feeding, deadheading	Chapman Landscapes	649.20	0.00	649.20
Winter planting	Mary Shorten	18.00	0.00	18.00
Annual Licence	Ethical Consumer	28.52	1.43	29.95
Quarterly fees	Unity Bank	25.65	0.00	25.65
Corporate credit card	Lloyds Bank	76.97	0.00	76.97
new planter	Plantscape	235.00	47.00	282.00
Mileage	Assistant Clerk	10.58	0.00	10.58
Payroll processing charge	Batchelor Coop	138.00	27.60	165.60
Staff pension	KCC LGPS	834.46	0.00	834.46
October salary	Clerk	1,435.56	0.00	1,435.56
October salary	Assistant Clerk	960.13	0.00	960.13
October salary	Admin assistant	446.23	0.00	446.23
Tax and NI October salaries	HMRC	312.04	0.00	312.04
Corporate credit card	Lloyds Bank	169.77	0.00	169.77
Office Electricity	Npower	131.43	6.57	138.00
Annual Licence	Scribe 2000	385.00	77.00	462.00
annual fees new email	EDGE I.T	37.60	7.52	45.12
Annual Licence	EDGE I.T	971.28	194.26	1,165.54
new email set up	EDGE I.T	60.00	12.00	72.00
Watering, feeding, deadheading	Chapman Landscapes	851.50	0.00	851.50
	Total	7,776.92	373.38	8,150.30

- (ii) That income dated 21 October 2020 be noted as detailed below:-

Description	Supplier	Net	VAT	Total
Bank interest	HSBC	0.64	0.00	0.64

Bank interest	NatWest Bank	0.10	0.00	0.10
	Total	0.74	0.00	0.74

(iii) That the financial position of the Council as at 30 September 2020 be noted as detailed on the summary of receipts and payments and statement of monies available in the Council's bank accounts as shown below:-

Nat West Current	£ 77,031.32
Lloyds Bank	£ 76,613.48
Cooperative Bank	£ 75,192.86
NatWest SIBA	£ 10,895.64
HSBC bond	£ 75,314.41
Unity Trust Bank	£ 64,962.23

RESOLVED: members agreed to note.

6020. CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

The Clerk reported that due to the second lockdown staff would now be working from home as much as possible. They would visit the office singly for printing, scanning and posting. She detailed ways in which they could each be contacted, and members discussed whether issuing each with a mobile phone would be useful.

RESOLVED: That two further basic mobile phones be purchased for staff to use whilst home working.

6021. PROPOSED OFFICE MOVE

Members discussed the on-going public consultation and the next steps of the process. Cllr Heath expressed concern at the content of the leaflet which he felt was misleading. The Clerk asked whether members would consider extending the deadline since the country had entered a second lockdown period in response to the Covid 19 pandemic and as a result some members of the public might have difficulty getting to the office to deliver their completed voting slip.

RESOLVED: That any completed forms postmarked on or prior to 10 November would be accepted even if they arrived after the deadline.

6022. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, 2 December 2020 at 7 pm via Zoom virtual meeting.

The following item was discussed in private under the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

6023. CO-OPTION

As reported at minute 6017 Councillors voted that the last item take place in closed session due to the personal nature of what was to be discussed.

- i) Members received the procedure for co-option of new councillors as an aide memoire

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

- ii) Members received the application details of four candidates in alphabetical order

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

- iii) Members received a verbal presentation from each candidate on why they would like to join Walmer Parish Council and what skills and experience they can bring to the role

RESOLVED: members agreed to note

- iv) Members voted for or against each candidate joining Walmer Parish Council

RESOLVED: that Gerry Bearman and Charlie Weale be co-opted onto the Council

- v) Members allocated the new councillors to committees

RESOLVED: That both Councillors be appointed to the Planning and Events committees.

Before the meeting closed Cllr Heath wished to express thanks to the three members of staff who had ensured the Council had continued to run well all despite the challenges imposed by the current pandemic. All agreed.

Cllr Pitcher asked to tender his resignation as a councillor with immediate effect. He wished to thank councillors for an enjoyable experience, and in particular Cllrs Mrs Beard-Gould and Mrs Le Chevalier for their professional support on the Amenity and Environment Committee and Walmer in Bloom committee respectively.

Councillors thanked him for his years of service and asked him to pass on his thanks to his wife for her hard work at Hawkshill Freedown.

The meeting closed at 21.32

WALMER PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Zoom Online meeting of Walmer Parish Council Planning Committee held on Tuesday 10th of November 2020 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors:

- Cllr J Murray (Chairman)
- Cllr B Gardner
- Cllr J Lonsdale
- Cllr M Beard-Gould
- Cllr A Herring
- Cllr G Bearman
- Cllr C Weale
- Mr R Styles (Conservation Warden)

Officers present:

- Sarah Plews (Planning Clerk)
- Joanne Watson (technical assistance)

4130. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for absence

4131. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr C Weale declared an interest as he is a relative of the applicant regarding agenda item 7 iii) DOV/20/01210 - 13 Granville Road Walmer - Erection of single storey and two storey rear and side extensions

4132. OPENNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

All present were reminded of the Rights and Obligations under the Local Government Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

4133. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting, held on Tuesday 27th of October 2020, were approved as a correct record, and will be signed by the Chairman at the earliest opportunity

4134. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

i) mins 4128. Cllr J Lonsdale would like to suggest that in future meetings, instead of just objecting to planning applications we are consulted on, members come up with an alternative proposal should Dover District Council disagree with members agreed decisions. Cllr J Lonsdale's suggestion is to approach other town councils to see if a counter proposal could be put together to purchase farmland to create a community woodland. To try to prevent this land just being concreted over with mass housing being built. Cllr J Lonsdale suggested writing to other local town and parish councils to achieve a co-operation with this proposal and see if they share members' interest.

RESOLVED: That the committee agrees to a letter of possible cooperation be sent out to all local town and parish councils.

RESOLVED: The Assistant Clerk advised members that the letter of possible cooperation has sent out to all local town and parish councils.

ii) Mins 4127 ii DOV/20/01125 - Site At Cross Road Deal

Outline application for the erection of up to 100 dwellings (with landscaping, appearance, layout, and scale to be reserved)

RESOLVED: Cllr B Gardner requests the exact reason for refusal by Dover District Council for this application. Cllr B Gardner, on behalf of Walmer Parish Council, will request a Freedom of Information to ascertain this query on the 11th of November.

4135. PLANNING DECISIONS

DOV/20/00941 - Peak House Hawksdown

Erection of a two storey detached annexe with rear balcony for ancillary use

WPC: Objected

DDC: GRANTED

RESOLVED: Members requested that the Assistant Clerk enquires what Dover District Councils' reasons are for granting this application. The Assistant Clerk will ask the planning officer who has decided this application

ii) DOV/20/00935 - 21 The Beach Walmer

Conversion of garage to ancillary accommodation, installation of 4no. rooflights and insertion of front ground floor window, replacing existing door

WPC: Positively Supported

DDC: GRANTED

iii) DOV/20/00928 - 123 Dover Road Walmer

Erection of a single storey rear extension and a rear dormer window, amendments to existing roof form to incorporate dormer (existing conservatory to be demolished) |

WPC: Positively Supported

DDC: GRANTED

4136. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – NEW

i) DOV/20/01188 - 25 Trafalgar Drive Walmer

T1 - London Plane - Crown reduce by two meters overall back to previous pruning points in order to remove encroachment from 25 Trafalgar Drive and 9 Sheffield Gardens

RESOLVED: That the committee positively supports the proposal

ii) **DOV/20/01109 - Liverpool House 59 Liverpool Road Walmer**

Beech tree T1 - remove lateral limb overhanging Liverpool Road and crown reduce by eight metres

RESOLVED: That the committee objects to this application for the following reasons:

i) **Walmer Parish Councils Tree Warden stated: Upon inspection a large bough has snapped off the main stem of the beech tree. I met with the applicant who advised that the large bough was in process of being logged and disposed of.**

The application is to remove a lateral limb and crown reduce by 8 metres. This is wholly inappropriate. Refer Arboriculturally Association definition of crown reduction.

Therefore, he does not support the application

ii) **Members also agreed that a professional arboriculturist report is not available within the application and not just a tree surgeons report**

Cllr C Weale withdrew from the following item due to DPI

iii) **DOV/20/01210 - 13 Granville Road Walmer**

Erection of single storey and two storey rear and side extensions

RESOLVED: That the committee positively supports the proposal

4137. HCLG SELECT COMMITTEE PUBLIC SURVEY - THE FUTURE OF THE PLANNING SYSTEM IN ENGLAND

i) Members received a report from the Planning Clerk

ii) Members received Kalcs response

iii) Members consider if Walmer Parish Councils Planning committee would like to respond

RESOLVED: Members advised the committee that they had previously commented on this item on the 18th of August 2019, therefore agreed to dismiss this item

4138. SHOLDEN PARISH COUNCIL

i) Members received a report from the Planning Clerk

ii) Members received documents reference Land to the South West of Sandwich Road: Richborough Estate 250 Dwellings

RESOLVED: Members agreed to defer this item until the 8th of December

4139. The Assistant Clerk advised members of the annual highways' parish seminar. This year due to the current Covid 19 situation these seminars will be held remotely on MS Teams on 23rd November at 13:00 – 16:00.

RESOLVED: All members declined the invitation

4140. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 8th of December 2020

The meeting closed at 20:20pm

Signed

Dated

WALMER PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & General Purposes Committee held at 7pm on Wednesday 25 November 2020 via Zoom Video Conference

Present Councillors: M Eddy (Chairman), Mrs S Le Chevalier, P Heath, A Herring, J Murray & D Symons

In attendance: Cllr C Weale

Officers Present: Mrs K Holroyd (Clerk)

1079. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None – all present

1080. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

1081. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 14 October were approved as a true record and will be signed by the chairman at the next opportunity.

1082. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

Cllr Miss Herring reported that the amendments to the Health and Safety and Equality and Diversity policies were underway but not yet completed.

Cllr Mrs le Chevalier expressed concern that due to the banks not currently being open for the change of signatory exercise, there was a possibility that the window for agreed change could expire. It was therefore agreed to renew the proposal in order to extend the amount of time available to implement it.

RECOMMENDATION: Members agreed that Cllr Mrs Le Chevalier become the second signatory of the HSBC bank account along with Cllr Heath.

1083. BUDGETS AND ACCOUNTS

- i) Members reviewed Council expenditure as at 19 November 2020

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

- ii) Members received the bank reconciliation report as at 19 November 2020

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

- iii) Members received information concerning the Lloyds Bank fixed term deposit and considered next steps.

RESOLVED: that when the Lloyds Bank fixed term deposit matures shortly it is not reinvested but kept on the linked Lloyds treasury account for purposes of liquidity until the Council's future plans are decided.

1084. DDC GRANT REQUEST FOR TOILETS 2021/22

Members welcomed Martin Leggatt, Head of Assets and Building Control from DDC to the meeting and considered the request for the coming year 2021/22. Mr Leggatt had been provided in advance with a list of councillors' questions and he proceeded to provide answers. Councillors requested that a means of presenting the annual request be simplified in order that the process become more streamlined. Cllr Heath asked whether there were plans to improve the poor state of the toilets at Marke Wood and Mr Leggatt replied that some modest improvements would be made early in 2021 at no cost to Walmer PC. Cllr Miss Herring enquired about extra measures being taken to keep facilities clean during the current pandemic and was assured that every effort was being taken to inform residents about additional checks.

Cllr Eddy thanked Mr Leggatt for his time and Mr Leggatt left the meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: That the grant to DDC for maintenance of the toilets within the parish in 2021/22 be agreed at a cost of £24,250.35. This discounted rate reflects the savings made during the current year when for a time the toilets were kept closed.

1085. OFFICE REVIEW

Members received two quotes to undertake a review of the parish office staffing requirements in line with a request from the HR Committee.

RECOMMENDATION: That the HR Services Partnership be asked to undertake the review at a total cost of £2095 plus vat.

Cllr Heath asked the Clerk if there were a way to standardise the payment of salaries instead of staff waiting for councillors to authorise payments online. The Clerk will investigate and report back to the next meeting.

1086. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next published meeting is Wednesday 24 February 2021 at 7pm via Zoom Video Conferencing but it was agreed a further meeting will probably be necessary in January to finalise the budget once DDC's final figures are available.

The Meeting closed at 7.56 pm

The following item was discussed in private under the terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960

1087. BUDGET 2021/22

Members started to draft a budget for 2021/22 for Council's consideration. Members worked through the budget headings noting estimated expenditure based on the current year spend and adding in proposed spending based on planned projects and anticipated increases. However, it was acknowledged that there are a number of unknowns due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the possible purchase of new premises.

RECOMMENDATION:

- i) That expected income be used to offset the expenditure**
- ii) That the draft budget be analysed and updated by full council at the next meeting**

The Clerk left for the remainder of the meeting.

1088. SALARY REVIEW -Members considered the 2019 salary reviews for the two members of staff as agreed by Council on 4 November 2020

- i) Members received various reports from the Clerk

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

- ii) Members received and considered the original report from the Chairman

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note

RECOMMENDATION: That the Clerk be awarded one incremental point on the salary scale backdated to April 2020

Signed: Date:

WALMER PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the meeting of the Amenity and Environment Committee held on Wednesday 18 November 2020 at 7pm via Zoom.

Present: Councillors:

M Eddy	Mrs Beard-Gould	D Symons
P St Ange (from 7.20pm	J Lonsdale	

Officer Present:

Mrs K Holroyd (Clerk)

1204. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

1205. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received

1206. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 16 September 2020 and it was agreed that they be signed as a true record by the chairman at the next face- to - face meeting.

1207. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED ELSEWHERE

None

The Chairman Cllr Eddy noted the number of members of the public in attendance and ascertained that they were interested in issues concerning York and Albany Close and the proposed community housing project. He therefore asked councillors for their agreement in bringing this item forward and suspending the meeting for fifteen minutes in order to let people speak. All were in agreement.

1208. COMMUNITY HOUSING

Members received a letter from a resident concerning the future of the site.

Since printing the agenda several further letters had been received at the Parish Office making similar comments and objections to use of the site as a community housing project.

Cllr Eddy assured those members of the public present that their letters and emails had been received and read by committee members.

Five members of the public made comments and asked questions. They all concerned the fact that the piece of land in question is used by lots of local people and is also a haven for wildlife. They broadly supported the idea of assisting young people in buying or renting their first home, but considered the location was unsuitable. One resident was concerned that the origins of the project and its subsequent consideration and discussion by various committees was unclear.

Cllr Eddy confirmed he would produce a fact sheet over the coming days to address the questions and concerns. He stressed that the project was at an early stage. The Council had instructed a firm to liaise with DDC over whether a small development on the site would be possible. The future of the project depended upon the outcome of that piece of work.

The Clerk confirmed that the land had not been neglected this year intentionally. It should have been cut five times over the summer months by DDC's contractors but due to Coronavirus restrictions, working practices had changed considerably and there was a backlog of work. She had been assured that the grass would be cut in the very near future. Similarly the hedge had been due to be cut in October when the nesting season had finished. The contractor in question also had a backlog of work.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note all letters and comments

1209. CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Members received the report of the chairman and the draft minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 28 October 2020.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

1210. YORK AND ALBANY CLOSE

- i) Members received the Inspection report and noted that no work was necessary apart from the grass and hedge cutting as mentioned at minute 1208 which was in hand.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

- ii) Members received a letter from a resident and consider the contents.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note. It was agreed that green waste should not be dumped on the site and that bonfires were not appropriate at present due to the coronavirus pandemic and the breathing difficulties that some people are experiencing as a result.

1211. STONY PATH

Members considered whether a mixture of tree planting and allotment creation is the best use of the space. Cllr Mrs Beard-Gould explained that the idea had started with the planning committee who had noted through their work the removal of several mature trees in the area.

RESOLVED: members agreed to ask the Council's tree warden for his advice on whether tree planting at Stony Path would be a good idea.

1212. ALLOTMENTS

Members received an update from the Clerk who noted that due to the resignation of Cllr Pitcher, the Council was without an allotment inspector.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to ask full council if anyone would be interested in taking on the role.

1213. DRILL FIELD

Members considered the inspection report and noted that all the work identified in the recent RoSPA report had been completed. No further work was necessary at this time.

RESOLVED: members agreed to note.

1214. HISTORIC VILLAGE PANELS

Members received an update from Dover District Council. The final proofs were now with Councillors. A few minor errors had been noted and would be sent back to DDC with a question about the validity of QR codes,

RESOLVED: Members agreed to note.

1215. TREE PLANTING PROJECT

- i) Members received information from Deal With It concerning a number of immature trees that were available for planting in public spaces by community groups.

RESOLVED: members agreed to note

- ii) Members considered possible sites as suggested by a local resident. Cllr Mrs Beard-Gould reported that she was due to meet with the KCC tree officer shortly and would discuss possible sites – including Stony Path – with him. She also reported a damaged tree on Dover Road which would appear to be beyond repair. KCC were due to remove it and would be asked to replace if possible.

RESOLVED: members agreed to note

1216. GRANVILLE ROAD TOILETS

The Clerk reported that although the new signage had been approved by Council it was on the proviso that DDC were still able to support the project. She had yet to receive a response on this.

RESOLVED: Members agreed to wait for DDC's response.

1217. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 27 January 2021 at 7pm via Zoom Video Conference.

The Chairman thanked the members of the public for their attendance and input and closed the meeting at 19.55.

.....
Signature

.....
Date

DRAFT

Clerk's report to Council 2 December 2020 – Highways Issues

1) Hawksdown parking issues

Members will recall that a request for a short length of double yellow lines along one section of Station Road was submitted to Kent Highways in October via the Highway Improvement Plan method. This does not necessarily mean that the work will be carried out but does mean that it stands a better chance since the Parish Council has logged it as a priority and has agreed to fund it. The anticipated cost of the double yellow lines installation is £2885.

Subsequently I have been approached by Kent Highways officers who themselves are in receipt of a request from residents of Hawksdown Estate to assist in deterring people from parking large vans along both sides of the approach road to the estate from Dover Road. They claim this makes passing very difficult and could prevent emergency vehicles getting through altogether. This is the only route into and out of the estate which comprises 55 properties.

Kent Highways officers have responded to the residents telling them that since there is no accident data available for the site, they are unable to assist. However, they have suggested that should Walmer Parish Councillors consider that it is an important issue, it could be added to the existing Highways Improvement Plan. This would be the most cost-effective way of carrying out the work since it could be undertaken at the same time as the works in Station Road and would cost an estimated £200. However, the officers warned that there is a possibility that the proposal will be contentious since it will reduce the number of parking spaces available for nearby residents and businesses.

Decision required:

- Do Members feel that the proposal has merit?
 - Do members feel they would like to add the proposal to the current Highways Improvement Plan?
-

2) Dover Road Speeding issues

I have been contacted by a member of the public seeking support for a speed watch scheme at Dover Road. Kent Highways and Kent Police recently undertook a speed survey and ascertained that vehicles were regularly traveling at an average of 33 mph in both directions at the Walmer/ Ripple boundary. Possible measures to deter speeding are limited due to the location – it is on the brow of a hill with limited visibility and nowhere to pull drivers over safely. However, some possible measures such as mobile signage are being explored. At this stage residents are simply looking to bring the issue to the Parish Council's attention and ask for their support in setting up a scheme which would be with the full knowledge and support of Kent Police and Kent Highways.

Members might like to consider offering support and considering what form that support could take.

FINANCIAL REPORT for Council Meeting on 2 December 2020

The Responsible Financial Officer requests

- a) That payments be authorised as detailed on payment list A attached dated 25 November 2020 (vouchers 148- 167)**
- b) That income received this month be noted as on receipts list B dated 25 November 2020 (vouchers 24-25)**
- c) that the financial position of the Council after these receipts and payments be noted as shown by:-**
 - i) The summary of receipts and payment by cost centre (C) dated 25 November 2020**
 - ii) The bank reconciliation (D) along with the list of unrepresented cheques and uncashed receipts dated 25 November 2020**

Attach 6

(A)


Walmer Parish Council
PAYMENTS LIST

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Cheque No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
148	02/11/2020		Natwest Current Acco	dd	Office Electricity	Npower	L	131.43	6.57	138.00
149	02/11/2020		Natwest Current Acco	dd	Office phone and internet	BT	S	165.91	33.18	199.09
150	05/11/2020		Unity Bank	624742182	Tax and NI October salaries	HMRC	E	312.04	0.00	312.04
151	05/11/2020		Unity Bank	254310034	Staff pension	KCC LGPS	E	834.46	0.00	834.46
152	05/11/2020		Unity Bank	818321616	november salary	Admin assistant	E	658.09	0.00	658.09
153	05/11/2020		Unity Bank	945808409	november salary	Clerk	E	1,684.56	0.00	1,684.56
154	05/11/2020		Unity Bank	867664304	november salary	Assistant Clerk	E	1,150.72	0.00	1,150.72
155	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	714317386	new email set up	EDGE I.T	S	60.00	12.00	72.00
156	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	724655379	Expenses	Cllr M Beard Gould	X	30.42	0.00	30.42
157	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	91007692	Grass cut and clearance	Rhino Plant Hire	S	870.00	174.00	1,044.00
158	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	141009889	Training	KALC	S	50.00	10.00	60.00
159	12/11/2020		Co-operative Bank	615192241	Training	KALC	S	45.00	9.00	54.00
160	12/11/2020		Co-operative Bank	589700914	Training	KALC	S	150.00	30.00	180.00
161	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	905999596	Paddling pool grant	DDC	E	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
162	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	34129047	Paddling pool grant	DDC	E	2,500.00	0.00	2,500.00
163	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	654121689	confidential shredding	castles shredding ltd	E	30.00	0.00	30.00
164	12/11/2020		Unity Bank	9053713	Christmas lights	Deal & Walmer Chamber of C	E	149.00	0.00	149.00
165	18/11/2020		Unity Bank	781211522	Grant	astor theatre	E	1,000.00	0.00	1,000.00
166	18/11/2020		Unity Bank	20807305	Printing of public consultation	East Kent leaflet Distribution	E	230.00	0.00	230.00
167	18/11/2020		Unity Bank	20807305	delivery of public consultation	East Kent leaflet Distribution	S	245.00	49.00	294.00
Total								12,796.63	323.75	13,120.38

(B)

Walmer Parish Council
RECEIPTS LIST

Voucher Code	Date	Minute	Bank	Receipt No	Description	Supplier	VAT Type	Net	VAT	Total
24 Interest payments	28/10/2020		HSBC Bond	bacs	Bank interest	HSBC	E	0.62	0.00	0.62
25 Interest payments	19/11/2020		Natwest SIBA	bacs	Bank interest	NatWest Bank	E	0.09	0.00	0.09
Total								0.71	0.00	0.71


Walmer Parish Council
Summary of Receipts and Payments
Summary - Cost Centres Only

Cost Centre	Receipts			Payments			Net Position
	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	Budgeted	Actual	Variance	+/- Under/over spend
Administration		0.60	1	27,420.00	11,316.18	16,104	16,104
Allotments	2,000.00	250.00	-1,750	1,000.00	588.08	412	-1,338
Audit Fees				1,200.00	781.50	419	419
Bank Interest	1,000.00	35.45	-965				-965
Climate emergency				750.00	28.52	721	721
Election Expenses				1,000.00		1,000	1,000
Events	5,650.00	550.00	-5,100	7,300.00	646.22	6,654	1,554
Grants and Donations		400.00	400	5,000.00	2,200.00	2,800	3,200
Hawkshill Management Plan							
Land Management	972.00	823.09	-149	7,900.00	1,128.50	6,772	6,623
Office premises				412.00		412	412
Precept	162,545.00	162,545.00					
Professional and Legal				1,675.00	1,656.27	19	19
Projects and Activities	100.00		-100	58,300.00	18,565.40	39,735	39,635
Publicity and Promotion		140.00	140	1,800.00	1,067.00	733	873
Quadrennial tree survey				3,000.00		3,000	3,000
Staff Salaries, PAYE, NI				52,000.00	32,839.92	19,160	19,160
Stony Path				8,875.00	450.00	8,425	8,425
Tree planting				5,742.00		5,742	5,742
Unallocated		1,122.75	1,123	6,500.00	1,628.37	4,872	5,994
VAT Repayments							
NET TOTAL	172,267.00	165,866.89	-6,400	189,874.00	72,895.96	116,978	110,578
Total for ALL Cost Centres		165,866.89			72,895.96		
V.A.T.		3,524.85			2,012.51		
GROSS TOTAL		169,391.74			74,908.47		

**Walmer Parish Council**

Prepared by: _____
Name and Role (Clerk/RFO etc)

Date: _____

Approved by: _____
Name and Role (RFO/Chair of Finance etc)

Date: _____

	Bank Reconciliation at 25/11/2020		
	Cash in Hand 01/04/2020		261,376.28
	ADD Receipts 01/04/2020 - 25/11/2020		169,391.74
			430,768.02
	SUBTRACT Payments 01/04/2020 - 25/11/2020		74,908.47
A	Cash in Hand 25/11/2020 (per Cash Book)		355,859.55
	Cash in hand per Bank Statements		
	Cash 04/05/2020	0.00	
	HSBC Bond 28/10/2020	75,315.03	
	Natwest SIBA 19/11/2020	10,895.73	
	Lloyds 04/05/2020	76,613.48	
	Co-operative Bank 09/04/2020	75,192.86	
	Natwest Current Account 02/11/2020	76,288.35	
	Unity Bank 03/11/2020	55,574.24	
			369,879.69
	Less unrepresented payments		14,020.14
			355,859.55
	Plus unrepresented receipts		0.00
B	Adjusted Bank Balance		355,859.55
	A = B Checks out OK		

Walmer Parish Council
Uncashed payments/transfers out (All banks)
(Upto 25/11/2020)

Voucher	Date	Cheque No.	Description	Total	Bank
85	03/08/2020	2696664	light panels	335.63	Unity Bank
87	03/08/2020	899577629	Training	42.00	Unity Bank
88	03/08/2020	823879411	Training	84.00	Unity Bank
118	23/09/2020	dd	Office water - 8 the Strand	29.83	Natwest Current Account
133	07/10/2020	891197292	new planter	282.00	Unity Bank
150	05/11/2020	624742182	Tax and NI October salaries	312.04	Unity Bank
151	05/11/2020	254310034	Staff pension	834.46	Unity Bank
152	05/11/2020	818321616	november salary	658.09	Unity Bank
153	05/11/2020	945808409	november salary	1,684.56	Unity Bank
154	05/11/2020	867664304	november salary	1,150.72	Unity Bank
155	12/11/2020	714317386	new email set up	72.00	Unity Bank
156	12/11/2020	724655379	Expenses	30.42	Unity Bank
157	12/11/2020	91007692	Grass cut and clearance	1,044.00	Unity Bank
158	12/11/2020	141009889	Training	60.00	Unity Bank
159	12/11/2020	615192241	Training	54.00	Co-operative Bank
160	12/11/2020	589700914	Training	180.00	Co-operative Bank
161	12/11/2020	905999596	Paddling pool grant	2,500.00	Unity Bank
162	12/11/2020	34129047	Paddling pool grant	2,500.00	Unity Bank
163	12/11/2020	654121689	confidential shredding	30.00	Unity Bank
164	12/11/2020	9053713	Christmas lights	149.00	Unity Bank
165	18/11/2020	781211522	Grant	1,000.00	Unity Bank
166	18/11/2020	20807305	Printing of public consultation leaflet	230.00	Unity Bank
167	18/11/2020	20807305	delivery of public consultation leaflet	294.00	Unity Bank
210	03/12/2019	4362	Councillors' Allowances	420.00	Natwest Current Account
302	06/03/2019	4346	WIB Plants	43.39	Natwest Current Account
Total-----				14,020.14	

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION:

Attach 7

FINAL RESULTS

We received: 401 forms in total

Of these, 20 forms had names and addresses but no answers.

An additional 5 forms did not give a response to Q1.

An additional 8 forms did not give a response to Q2

We received 376 answers to the first question

We received 373 answers to the second question

	YES	NO
Q1	188	188
Q2	183	190

The total percentages were 50% in favour of the new office and community hub. 50% no

The total percentages were 49.06% in favour of an increase to the precept. 50.94 % no

Council tax information from Dover District council. Correct as at November 2020

Band	Number of properties in Walmer	multiplier	Approx. cost of increase	
			Per annum	Per week
A	454	6/9ths	£3.61	6.9p
B	1144	7/9ths	£4.21	8.0p
C	1056	8/9ths	£4.81	9.3p
D	513	9/9ths	£5.42	10.4p
E	527	11/9ths	£6.62	12.7p
F	306	13/9ths	£7.82	15.0p
G	203	15/9ths	£9.03	17.2p
H	5	18/9ths	£10.84	20.8p



Attach 8

WALMER PARISH COUNCIL

Consultation

History of Project

Consultation and Scope

Responses 1

Responses 2

Results

Public comments including Facebook postings

**By Cllr J Murray – Chairman of the Council and Cllr M Eddy
Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee**

November 2020

Walmer Parish Council

History of Consultation Project

During a full Council meeting, 9th September 2020, Councillors discussed an exciting opportunity which had arisen to purchase a small suite of offices which could be used for both administration purposes and as a community hub and which was on the same street as our present office.

After a comprehensive discussion of the pros and cons of such a step together with the inadequacy of the present one roomed office the Council delegated a small group of Councillors and the clerk to investigate the price of such a purchase and report back.

All Councillors had been previously been offered the opportunity to visit the property prior to the meeting. Councillors present at the meeting were invited one by one for their views Some were uncertain and asked for more details but a majority were in favour of taking the first step.

On September 30th 2020, after a full and frank discussion; a decision was made by full Council to proceed with the purchase and to apply for a loan from the PWLB for a maximum of £250,000 to supplement the cash resources already saved by the council for the purchase of a commercial building. Councillors had been provided in advance with a copy of a comprehensive financial breakdown prepared by the Clerk with a number of different options including different repayment figures to enable them to make a considered decision. The amount of the loan, the length of the term and the type of loan were voted on.

A report on the Parish Office accommodation was also included prepared by the Clerk.

CONSULTATION:

The Council, in the interests of openness and transparency, sought advice on how to deliver the widest possible consultation process to our ratepayers.

Our website, our own social media, the local community magazine and press releases were all obvious channels of communication.

Following discussions with the Kent Association of Local Councils we also decided to distribute a consultation leaflet to every household in the parish. Although informed that this was not compulsory members wished to generate the widest response possible from residents. A leaflet was drawn up and given to both KALC and the Government department involved for final comments. Once these were received, the leaflet was posted onto the Parish Council website and announced on the Parish Council Facebook page. This was done on October 10th 2020 with the Consultation due to run for a month.

Consultation Process and Scope. To ensure the fullest distribution Walmer Parish Council contracted a specialist distribution company to deliver to all addresses in Walmer. A number of extra leaflets were retained in the Parish Office to be handed out if requested and the leaflet could also be downloaded from the internet.

Delivery was done by a reputable, established company, using a tracking service. Properties that were identified as not having had a delivery for whatever reason had leaflets put through their doors as soon as we were given their addresses, or if more convenient sent to them via email at their request. Although electronic tracking confirmed that deliveries had been made it appears that

some residents, (particularly in blocks of flats where mail can be dumped by deliverers), may have inadvertently disposed of our consultation leaflet at the same time as what they regarded as 'junk mail'. This generated some problems. When we were made aware of missing leaflets and given specific addresses, Councillors or staff members immediately delivered replacements.

An extra advantage in publicising our consultation was that from the 1st October the local press and social media sites had already learned of the Council's decision by means of a press release from us and were reporting it widely publicising the news on the forthcoming consultation in part due to a District Councillor informing the press of the Council's decisions. Consultation was officially launched October 10th 2020 on the Parish Council web and Facebook page and ran for one month.

The leaflet was re-posted for a second time on the Parish Council website on October 27th because we wished to remind ratepayers of the consultation. Copies of the leaflet were placed in the window of the office which despite the Covid-19 restrictions was manned most days. Contact telephone numbers and email addresses of the office and the Chairman were easily accessible by viewing a notice on the door of the office and on the web. The local free community magazine Rural Roundup also had an article about the proposed purchase. Many businesses in Walmer were hand delivered a copy of the leaflet.

Our local newspaper in both the printed and online editions carried stories and letters from the public both supporting and questioning the proposals.

Local social media groups ran an ill-informed and inaccurate campaign against the proposal. Regrettably, once the first inaccuracies were posted others - many of whom did not actually live in Walmer - chose to join in. This campaign appeared to be organised by a small group who appeared keen to promote the continued payment of rent to landlords rather than spending money on purchasing a property which once the mortgage was paid off would become rent free and would be a community owned asset.

Prominent among the misleading statements was the claim that we were tied into a 15-year lease with a guaranteed low rent for the whole term of the lease. In fact we are able to re-assign the lease and there is a rent review due in two years time which could result in an increase in costs.

Some of the other comments were just silly. 'The Council chose this location because they want a sea view' [we have such a view already and it is not as good in the new offices] 'The Chairman wants a private office'. [Councillors are only infrequent visitors to WPC offices which are primarily a place for administrative staff to work.] Once mooted such inaccuracies were repeated and expanded many times on social media and via email communications to councillors whose contact details are all available on our website.

Our policy is always to be as open and transparent as possible so we answered every question - the Chairman alone answered some one hundred and seventy-eight questions. Apart from the hysterical 'noise' on social media platforms the actual number of correspondents numbered no more than a handful all of whom were invited to apply for the then current vacancies for Councillors which were in the process of being filled. They all declined this offer. As well as the Chair some individual Councillors also received questions. The Clerk also received numerous questions from the public via email, from in person visits to the offices and via telephone all of whom were given as thorough an answer as was possible. Residents were also invited to ask questions at several council meetings - during September (two meetings), October and November, these were logged and answered by the Clerk after the meeting although the Chair did make every effort to clarify some points during the Zoom meeting.

Responses 1.

Numerous emails were received and a number of these emails explained that although they had already answered no, they thought that the principle of purchasing was right and they requested more specific information. Two emails received explained that they had already answered in the negative just before the consultation closed, but based on their own investigations they now fully supported the proposal and their answer would now be yes. (These were not counted as this response came into the office too late and the original answered accepted only)

The most frequent comment was why now? The answer to this is actually quite simple. The Council's declared policy was to purchase suitable premises and the present arrangement was recorded in the minutes at the time the lease was agreed as an interim measure. This was the first time that a suitable property has become available at a reasonable cost.

This, combined with low interest rates and the fact that we had significant funds which had been earmarked for this purchase that were earning virtually no interest and were declining in value [a situation which had already attracted criticism from ratepayers] influenced members to make an offer for the premises and to seek approval to borrow for a mortgage.

Another frequently made comment was that the leaflet was biased for approval. This frequently repeated statement we cannot understand, we put our achievements to date on the leaflet, our ambitions, our fixed costs for maintaining public toilets and a much loved local children's paddling pool and the cost to the Council Tax if the residents approved of our plan to buy. The figure of an 11% was used by some to criticise the proposal but they failed to mention that this was in fact only 10.5 per week of our small share (£48.66 per year, Band D) of the overall tax demand and not 11% of the total rateable charge for Kent residents. The comparative illustrative figure of rent charges over the 20-year term of the loan was based on quoted current commercial rents during a valuation visit on October 6th 2020 to our existing premises.

Questions were raised on the community hub. The suggestion for the idea of a community hub came from interested residents in an email to the Clerk when the news of our proposed purchase first emerged. We had always thought that we were regarded as the community resource hub anyway and we liked the ideas we received so much that we included it in the consultation leaflet. There is no "one-size-fits-all" community hub and we made it clear that we would respond to our residents and expand on our current role as the focal point for help locally. The District Council currently has a Community Hub providing information virtually so we can use their experience and model to guide us.

Responses 2.

Up to Friday 6th November 2020 a total of 286 responses were received with an average of 60% yes to both questions.

From Friday morning 6th November 2020 to the end of the consultation another 115 came in.

This date is important as on this date some information, much inaccurate, regarding this proposal appeared on prominent notices and banners within Walmer, which remained in place until the end of the consultation. Examples are listed within this document. On Sunday pm 8th November one of these property owners added additional information, displaying a letter from the Chairman correcting and explaining erroneous points on the notices. We do not know how many people saw this information, but we know that a total of 115 responses then arrived at the office with a

negative rate of 75% whereas the negative percentage rate was only averaging 40% prior to this campaign.

6th November 2020 a co-ordinated campaign against our proposal was launched in Walmer using banners and notices displayed on the walls of three houses.

(Sample of statements,)

- Walmer Council want to buy a house and want to borrow your money
- Understand the facts, it's not at all transparent
- Recent Council meeting confirmed their leaflet was bias (sic) towards gaining approval
- Not fully considered and appears rushed
- The current rent was fixed for 15 years with guaranteed no rent increases.
- We are buying a house and 'it needs money spent to bring it up to EPC rating at additional cost'
- Page 3 of the leaflet (list of achievements and events put on by WPC) 'Is this true? Did the Council really fund all these? Surely many of these are funded at least in part by the event host? Allotments are hired by the plot.
- The desire to purchase a property was considered when the council was created. It has been quiet for 15 years, why the rush?
- How many more trees or environmental projects could be supported with the existing funds?
- It was the first property looked at
- DDC, KCC and large business are all releasing property assets, why buck the trend?
- Payoff after 20 years, assumes it can be sold, who says the current parish structure will be in place in 2040?
- Having to borrow with threat to interest rate rises in the longer term.
- Only small meetings will fit and likely one at a time.
- Say No to Walmer Parish Council's decision to buy a property now!
- The 'public consultation' has been flawed, rushed, misleading biased + not provided voters with sufficient information to make a proper decision
- During these uncertain times it is totally unethical to spend +borrow
- Say no to Walmer Parish Council's decision to buy a house (62, The Strand)
- We will still be liable for rent in current office until March 2028 (unless they sublet it)
- The public consultation is deliberately biased so you will support it
- The decision has not been properly debated or options discussed
- The decision is being rushed
- Staff and Councillors are working remotely-they have agreed to buy new laptops +mobile phones 'so they don't a different new office' (sic)
- While other businesses are rationalising and working from home this decision is out of step
- You may have overlooked the leaflet and assumed it was junk mail-post a note, check out the office window their website+facebook. Email your questions, email your vote. If you need help getting a form please ask.

RESULTS OF CONSULTATION:

Total of 401 responses were received. This represents 9.5% of the Parish residents (based on 4208 properties - DDC data 2020)

90.5% of Council Tax payers did not respond.

Two questions were asked:

- Are you in FAVOUR of the parish council going ahead with the new office and community hub? YES / NO
- Are you in FAVOUR of the parish going ahead with the new office and community hub if it includes a Council Tax increase of 11% (equivalent to 10.5p per week) which will help to pay off the Government loan? YES / NO

Prior to the campaign (above) which started on 6th November the results were:

Question 1. YES: 160 NO: 104

Question 2. YES: 156 NO: 107

60.6% answered yes to the Parish Council going ahead with the new office.

59.3% answered yes to an increase in the Precept.

Between 6th November and the end of the consultation period another 112 responses came in that had answers to one or both questions.

QUESTION 1. YES:28 NO: 84

QUESTION 2: YES 27 NO: 83

25% answered yes to the Parish Council going ahead with the new office.

24.54% answered yes to an increase in the Precept

FINAL RESULTS

We received: 401 forms in total

Of these, 20 forms had names and addresses but no answers.

An additional 5 forms did not give a response to Q1.

An additional 8 forms did not give a response to Q2

We received 376 answers to the first question

We received 373 answers to the second question

The total percentages were 50% in favour of the new office and community hub. 50% no

The total percentages were 49.06% in favour of an increase to the precept. 50.94 % no

	YES	NO
Q1	188	188
Q2	183	190

SAMPLE RESPONSES FROM PUBLIC: Via Social media and other sources (some too offensive to repeat):

- *outrage that councillors are buying a house with our money that they will obviously live in for free*
- *that councillors will sell the house for their personal profit after 5 or 10 years (and they bought it with our money)*
- *why should they buy a house?*
- *Our council tax will increase considerably to pay for illegal immigrants*
- *Why have it on the seafront? there must be cheaper properties elsewhere*
- *where will they hold their meetings? why not just rent the parish hall?*
- *beware my council bought a house and then turned it into a half way house for prisoners*
- *What drugs are the councillors on?"*
- *This is to provide an office for the Chair and Councillors*
- *A vanity project*
- *Why buy such a small property?*
- *Ridiculous idea having a community hub*
- *Why a rush?*
- *that 'certain' houses or streets have been missed out as the occupants are likely to vote a certain way*
- *Is poor value only benefits the Councillors and employees of the WPC, is being snuck through*

SAMPLE OF COMMENTS RECEIVED VIA EMAIL TO COUNCILLORS:

- We have read the blurb and did feel that it would be an asset. Problem with a smaller Council is that it is overwhelmed by District and County.
- Sounds a good investment in fact and you are probably doing a very sensible thing
- I am not averse to owning property, it can make considerable profit over time so let's see what happens.
- The use of public funds needs to be considered very carefully.
- I am sorry if I come sometimes across as direct and abrupt. I know this is a fault of mine.

- I hope you can answer my questions and supply the information to address my areas of ignorance. I look forward to receiving a response.
- I do not object to WPC obtaining better Premises to suit both its purposes and those of the Community but this is not the right time.
- I am not against WPC, per se, acquiring different premises but, surely, those premises must provide suitable accommodation for the betterment of Walmer Parish.
- What a good idea, best of luck
- Thank you for all the things you organise throughout the year
- By buying the new building WPC, and not a landlord, will have control over its destiny, which is surely a key objective of any council.
- Walmer Parish Council has a fiduciary duty to look after the interests of the organisation and to think a bit further than the next election, by buying the new building it is doing so.
- [WPC] should be left to complete the purchase, unhindered by unsound speculation from without.
- Please find attached our completed questionnaire agreeing to the purchase of premises, and not renting a property in the future. Whilst it may benefit us, it will benefit the Walmer community as a whole for the foreseeable future.
- I am in favour of the council purchasing a modest property for use as offices instead of renting.

Parish Office Accommodation.

Report for council meeting of Wednesday 25 November 2020 and, subject to Council resolution, for MHCLG

Walmer Parish Council's current office space fulfils neither the function of staff workspace nor councillor meeting space fully or satisfactorily. At the Council meeting of 9 September 2020 councillors considered how best to meet the future needs of the council and its staff.

The three members of office staff for Walmer Parish Council currently work from a one room open plan office which also doubles as meeting space for all committee and the full Council meetings. *(Current Covid-19 pandemic restrictions oblige WPC to adopt a remote meetings strategy for the foreseeable future. Staff are working from home some of the time to limit numbers in the office. Maximum number of staff members present at one time is two.)*

The office is leased. The fifteen-year lease was drawn up in March 2012 and expires in March 2027. A rent of £6000 per annum was renewed at the rent review in March 2017.

Advantages of current office arrangements

- All staff work together so that they are familiar with the workings of the office and with what each other is doing.
- Lease costs are low and maintenance costs are covered by the landlord.
- The location is highly visible and the profile of the Council has been raised as a result.
- Council meetings all take place in one location with no additional costs.

Disadvantages of current office arrangements

- When a meeting is held during office hours there is inevitable disruption and distraction of staff.
- The meeting itself is disrupted by telephone calls and by members of the public coming to the reception desk.
- Whenever there is a visitor to the office there is inevitable disruption of staff.
- There is no privacy for a member of the public with a confidential grievance.
- There is no privacy and therefore no confidentiality for Councillors who may wish to consult with the clerk on some issue, problem or proposal.
- There is nowhere for Councillors to meet or work.
- There is nowhere for individual staff members to be able to concentrate on work that needs focus and no distraction.
- There is nowhere for staff members to take a break.
- The space cannot accommodate the number of councillors and members of the public wishing to attend meetings comfortably.
- Councillors cannot all find seats at the table and - the current social distancing restrictions notwithstanding - there is general over-crowding and discomfort.

At an extraordinary meeting on 30 September a proposal was made and approved to negotiate for the purchase of a specific freehold property which meets the majority of the council's needs and which was known to be for sale on The Strand. (Resolutions to be attached)

Advantages

- Smaller offices which allow for private meetings and uninterrupted work space.

- Rooms for smaller meetings to take place during office hours
- Larger meetings to continue to take place via Zoom or in other community locations.
- Acquisition of a community asset as an investment for the future
- The location is highly visible and the profile of the Council can be maintained as a result.

Financing of the project

It has been a long-term intention of the Council to purchase premises and a sum of £78,000 has been built up for this purpose. The Council also holds reserves for other specific projects and a large reserve equating to twelve months' running costs for contingencies. The Council often faces criticism for holding such a large sum on account.

A financial plan has been drawn up whereby all the Council's existing plans, projects and initiatives can be accommodated and an offer of £335,000 be made for the freehold property on the Strand. Plans include servicing the existing lease if reassigning it proves difficult.

The plan involves the use of the designated fund of £78,000 as well as £15,000 identified for a discontinued Hawkshill conservation plan and an additional £57,000 of unrestricted funding. This leaves a shortfall of approximately £200,000 allowing for costs of office relocation and associated fees. It is proposed to make an application to borrow up to £250,000 from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB)

Please see attached budget and raw data from the public consultation held between 10 October 2020 and 10 November 2020.

- **To seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government to apply for a Public Works Loans Board loan of £250,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for the purchase of office space and community hub. The annual loan repayments will come to around £16,000. It is also intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 11% which is the equivalent of an additional £5.46 a year.**