

# Aylesford Parish Council

## Policy & Resources Committee

### Minutes of the Meeting held in the Aylesford Parish Council Office, Aylesford on Tuesday 9 January 2024

**Present:** Councillors Sullivan (Chairman), Balcombe, Mrs Birkbeck, Chapman, Craig, Ms Dorrington, Mrs Eves, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ms Oyewusi, Rillie, Sharp and Smith.

**In Attendance:** Melanie Randall (Clerk)

**Apologies:** Councillors Fuller, Mrs Ogun, Shelley and Walker.

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#### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies of Absence from Councillors Fuller, Mrs Ogun, Shelley and Walker, were received, and the reasons for absence agreed.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest additional to those contained in the Register of Members Interests.

#### 3. Minutes of the last meeting held on 5 December 2023

It was **Agreed** that the Minutes from the meeting held on 5 December 2023 be approved as a correct record and be signed.

#### 4. Accounts for Payment

The Council considered the Payment Schedule attached to the Agenda and Councillor Balcombe proposed and Councillor Mrs Gadd Seconded and it was **Resolved** that 62 payments totalling £37,457.57 be made.

#### 5. Finance Advisory Sub Committee

It was **Agreed** to note the minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2023.

**Noted**

## 6. KALC

No update received.

**Noted**

## 7. TMBC/Parish Partnership Panel Meeting

No update received. The next meeting is due to take place in early 2024. **Noted**

## 8. Council Vacancies

There is one vacancy for Eccles Ward.

An application was received and discussed. A vote took place, and the results were.

For = 8          Against = 3          Abstained = 2

It was **Resolved** to accept the applicant.

**Resolved**

## 9. Adoption of Aylesford Station

There has not been any further progress.

**Ongoing**

## 10. Aylesford Christmas Market

The Christmas Market took place on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2023 and was a successful event. The Christmas Market committee debrief meeting has taken place and having taken the positive and negative feedback on board, improvements and changes will be made for the 2024 Christmas Market to further enhance the event. There is a possibility that it will be held over two days. The Clerk has spoken to Gallagher's, and they are supportive, set up would be the Friday, with the market taking place on Saturday and Sunday and pack up on Monday morning. This is currently subject to Aylesford Community Centre allowing the hall to be used on the morning of Monday 2 December 2024. Unfortunately, this means that one regular hirer would not be able to use the hall that day. The Community Centre Trustees are currently considering the request and will let the market committee know as soon as possible. The Market AGM is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 21 February 2024, at 18:30 in the Parish Office.

The Council thanked the Clerk and Staff for their hard work and dedication to this community event.

**Closed**

## 11. Allotment Fees 2025/26

The Clerk explained that unfortunately in order to ensure the income matches the expenditure for the allotments a larger than normal increase is needed across both sites, particularly so that the Council can continue to provide water to allotment holders. The main costs are the water supply and grass maintenance both of which are rising. The options are to increase the fees to be able to continue the same service or to stop providing water. The Council is not obliged to supply water, and should it wish to stop this then it must give allotment holders one years notice outside of the growing season so people can make other arrangements.

The Clerk suggested that the office send a short questionnaire to all allotment holders seeking their views on two options,

1. The increase, listing how much each plot size would be in 2025/26 and seeking their views on if they would be happy to pay it to still have water provided
2. If they do not agree with the increase do they understand the Council will have to stop providing water.
3. Do they have a water but.

After discussion it was **Resolved** that the office can send out the short questionnaire, once the results are collated the Clerk will report back to this committee for further discussion and decision.

**Ongoing**

## **12. 2024/25 Budget – Precept Setting**

The Committee considered the proposed Precept Report in respect of the Precept for the financial year of 2024/25.

The Precept for 2023/24 was £289,856.45 and for a Band D property this was £65.00 per household per year. The suggested Precept for 2024/25 is £305,983.48, an annual increase of £16,127.03, or £2.28 per Band D property. The total annual cost for a Band D property based on the suggested Precept would be £67.28.

It was **Resolved** to recommend to Council that the Precept be set at £305,983.48 and the budgets in the Precept Report be submitted to Committee for approval.

**Closed**

## **13. TMBC Owned Car Parks in Aylesford – Proposed Implementation of Parking Charges and Impact on Parish Owned Car Parks**

The committee considered the proposals from TMBC to implement charges. After discussion it was Agreed that the Council strongly objects to any charges being implemented in the car parks, for reasons such as

- Residents have no choice but to park in them as many do not have their own parking
- Parents/Carers doing the school run will be affected
- Tradesmen carrying out work for residents and businesses will also be impacted, of course with the recent implementation of the height restrictions going in they probably already have difficulty working in the village due to many having to carry ladders.
- Aylesford Village Community Centre may also be impacted, large groups will naturally spill over into the public car parks as there simply isn't enough room in the Parish Councils private car park. People may stop using the hall if they think there is the possibility they may have to pay for parking.
- Then there's Aylesford Football Club, who will also be impacted by this implementation of charges.

The Clerk will put together an objection and send to the Chairman and Vice Chairman to agree before sending it to TMBC.

Objection attached at Appendix A

The Clerk then explained that if TMBC do proceed with this proposal, it will immediately affect the Parish Councils own car park, which is a private one for users of the Community Centre, Football Club, the Parish Council and those who wish to use the Recreation Ground or Play Area. Everyone will park in here and there will not be any room for those who use the site. There are plenty of signs in the car park informing people it is private, but people take no notice of them. The Clerk asked for members approval that she can approach some Car Parking Management Companies for advice on the best options available to manage the car park and report back to committee. it was **Resolved** the Clerk can proceed. **Ongoing**

#### **14. Any Other Correspondence**

There was no Other Correspondence

#### **15. Duration of Meeting**

7.42pm to 8.57pm

10 January 2024

**Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (Off-Street Parking Places) Order 2023  
No.2**

**Consultation on Proposed New Parking Charges for Bailey Bridge (East) and  
Bailey Bridge (West) car parks, Aylesford.**

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) are proposing to introduce parking charges in the above car parks and to also improve and extend the East car park to create an additional 15 to 30 Pay & Display and Season Ticket parking spaces, which will be available for all to use.

The proposed charges are.

Up to 30 minutes - 60p

Up to 1 hour - £1.20

Up to 2 hours - £2.00

Up to 3 hours - £2.90

Up to 4 hours - £3.80

Up to 23 consecutive hours £5.80

One month season ticket - £29.00

A 12-month season ticket - £290.00

As per its comments in 2020 Aylesford Parish Council still **Strongly Object** to the implementation of parking charges.

The majority of users are residents who have no choice but to park in the public car parks, they should not be penalised for wanting to live in a historic area where properties were built many years ago with no parking. For most residents there is no other parking option for them as there is very little on street parking provision in Aylesford Village due to its historic nature.

An annual payment of £290 for each vehicle is a lot of money especially with no guarantee of a parking space.

Residents naturally have visitors who will then have to pay to visit their friends and family.

Parents/Carers doing the school run will also be affected by this, as will people who work in the village with some having to question whether they can afford to pay the charges to come to work.

Businesses will suffer either through loss of staff, who in the current climate may not be able to afford to continue working in the village or through a loss of people visiting.

Then there are tradesmen to consider who are carrying out work for residents and businesses. They will have to pay and of course with the recent reinstatement of the height barriers this already affects them being able to park as some workmen have large vans and/or ladders that now cannot fit underneath the height restrictions. Those

that can fit underneath the restriction will then have to pay, many will not want to and will park possibly causing an obstruction in nearby roads.

The Aylesford Village Community Centre may also be impacted by these charges as although hirers use the Parish Councils private car park, there will be times when they do need to use the public car parks due to large bookings/parties. People may stop using the community centre if there is the chance they will have to pay for parking.

The Parish Councils private car park is extremely busy at weekends due to the high use of the community centre. Aylesford Football Club is based on site too and the public car parks are fully utilised. Why should people attending these community activities be penalised.

What about people like the elderly who want to pop to the village shop to get their daily newspaper, or some milk etc. They won't do this if they must pay 60p to park they will go to Sainsburys where parking is free. The charges will have a negative impact on the village shop.

If TMBC are minded to implement the charges people will look elsewhere for parking, namely on-street parking up Forstal Road and/or on the surrounding residential roads which as already stated is very limited, which will cause issues for residents not to mention congestion due to inconsiderate parking in the immediate areas.

In 2020 the Parish Council suggested that if the Borough Council chose to implement the charges then there should be no charge for the first half an hour, to enable people to pop into the village quickly i.e., to buy their newspaper.

The Parish Council also suggested that due to the high number of community/social activities taking place at weekends, free parking should be provided in order to offer some support.

However, there does not seem to be any reference to this in the current consultation and the Parish Council questions why these are not included within the consultation proposals?

The two public car parks are used very differently from most others round the Borough due to them being in a historic area, and the amount of community/social events that take place in the village and for this reason the Parish Council feels they should be treated differently.

The Parish Council hopes that common sense will prevail and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council refuse the implementation of these car parking charges as the introduction of such charges will be detrimental to the village, its residents and visitors.

*Aylesford Parish Council*