

*These minutes are subject to approval at the meeting on February 12<sup>th</sup> 2008*

**Biddenden Parish Council**

Minutes of the meeting held in the Old Village Hall on January 8<sup>th</sup> 2008

Present

Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft

Cllr A Barfoot

Cllr Mrs E Cansdale

Cllr M Conway

Cllr C Daly

Also present 7 parishioners.

Cllr C Friend

Cllr T Lupton

Cllr H Richards

Cllr J Rymer Jones - **Chairman**

Cllr P Whapham – **Vice Chairman**

Prior to the formal meeting WPC Annie Williams (on behalf of Sgt Rachel Lovell) gave an overview of the community role of PCSO's. (*Descriptive paper handed to each councillor*) She said Biddenden was unusual in funding its own PCSO as most villages shared an Officer, but the benefit to Biddenden was that the Officer would only cover Biddenden unless required for essential police work elsewhere.

It was now unlikely that our PCSO would be available before April due to recruitment and training issues. (*Cllr Daly agreed to check this with the PCSO Police Inspector*)

In answer to questions WPC Williams said,

- The PCSO would work a 40 hour week between 07.00 and 23.00 on a shift basis.
- The Council should discuss with Sgt Lovell the priority of local matters that it would like addressed
- If the Council could offer secure storage a cycle could be made available for the officer's use.
- WPC Williams reminded the Council she could always be contacted on **07870 252951**

The Chairman thanked WPC Williams for her presentation and opened the formal meeting.

1 Apologies for absence

Cllr Mo Charlton (unwell) and Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC

2 Members Register of interests

There were no alterations.

3 Items raised by parishioners present

Ms Clark raised issues arising from her letter of December 12<sup>th</sup>. The Chairman said they would be discussed under "Correspondence".

4 Minutes of the meeting held on December 11<sup>th</sup> 2007

These were approved with the amendments suggested by Cllr Lupton which have already been circulated to all councillors. An amended copy is held on the Clerks file and is published on the village website.

It was agreed that in future minutes prepared by the Clerk would be displayed, as soon as possible, on the village notice boards and the website with the overprint "Draft". Hopefully this will avoid the minutes as being interpreted as "approved" before they actually are.

## 5 Reports from Group Chairmen

### Car park and toilets

Cllr Whapham said some new saplings had been planted to strengthen the hedge. The disabled ramp to the Post Office would be constructed over January 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup>. At the same time the builder would be attending to the problems with toilet door closing.

Cllr Whapham reported that the smoke alarms in the toilets had been set off and as the control panel was in the PO it had been necessary to call Mrs Ashton to cancel the alarm. This was clearly unsatisfactory and the Clerk undertook to ascertain if an alarm was legally necessary and also whether it was an insurance requirement. (*Subsequently established it is unnecessary*)

Cllr Barfoot queried whether the Council's insurance covered vandalism and if not what extra premium would be necessary.

Cllr Richards queried the provision of a RADAR lock on the disabled toilet and Cllr Daly said the police recommended against this because of the abuse of the RADAR key and therefore they considered the existing locks to be safer.

Cllr Daly asked that provision of CCTV in the car park be a February agenda item. The Clerk reported that ABC was seeking more information on the proposed fence around the car park.

### Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow

Cllr Richards said the major outstanding work was spreading wood chips on the footpaths but this had been delayed by wet weather.

### Traffic and Pedestrians

Cllr Friend said the main current issue was the relaying of the south side pavement and it was agreed that a meeting of all interested parties was essential to move the project forward. Items which needed clarification include the type of surface, planning issues associated with its Grade 1 status and funding. Cllr Friend would arrange with KCC Highways.

Cllr Friend explained the position of the byway between Fosten Green and Woolpack Corner as it had recently been rough surfaced by KCC. This had been done as it is a BOAT (Byway Open To All Traffic)

### Gordon Jones Field

Playground repairs would be considered at the next meeting.

### Police

Cllr Conway reported on the PACT initiative, involving Police/community liaison. He would attend future meetings.

### Youth

Cllr Daly said he was discussing with Tom Swain the possibility of extending, by one week, the summer sports programme.

### Community Workshop

The Chairman said a review of the meeting on December 6<sup>th</sup> was being prepared by Ashford BC. ABC would contact all those who took part and seek comments before a "final" paper was produced. The Chairman said he hoped to arrange a Parish Council follow up meeting of participants on April 3<sup>rd</sup> which Councillors would be welcome to attend.

- 6 Finance (See attached list of payments authorised)  
Cllr Lupton said he had been informed by the Clerk that in discussion with the Audit Commission he had been advised that the council would be prudent to anticipate a potential bill of £5000 to meet the costs of their investigation into the Parish Council accounts for the years 2005/6 and 2006/7. He had considered seeking the Council's agreement to increase the proposed precept by £3000 but as the appointment of the PCSO (see opening report) was now likely to be delayed he felt the budget would be adequate. All agreed to keep the proposed precept at £44,000.  
With reference to the MF ditching (see JC Excavations) it was agreed a letter of thanks would be written to the relevant landowner.
- 7 Planning (See attached)
- 8 Correspondence (See attached)  
Ms Clark's letter of 12<sup>th</sup> December concerning the recording of items raised by parishioners in the minutes and the chairman's response of December 16<sup>th</sup> was noted.  
It was agreed that the Clerk would write to Mrs Clark concerning her letter (copied to all Councillors) of December 17<sup>th</sup>. He was also asked to write to the Kentish Express reminding them that the minutes they receive are "Draft".  
Ms Clark's letter of December 18<sup>th</sup> was discussed. The issues raised in the letter are covered in minutes 4 and 10  
The Chairman said that in future he would not reply to letters sent to him if they concerned the general business of the Council but forward them to the Clerk to respond to or refer to the Council as appropriate.
- 9 Items for future consideration  
It was agreed the Annual Parish Meeting would be on April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7pm  
Councillors asked that the following be on the February agenda,
- Parish Council files (Cllr Richards)
  - South side pavement (Cllr Friend)
  - Risk assessment (Cllr Lupton)
  - Internal audit (Cllr Lupton)
  - CCTV in the car park (Cllr Daly)
  - Playground repairs (Cllr Charlton)
- 10 Closed session  
The Chairman reported that he had been advised by NALC to take further advice before presenting the minute of the closed session of the December meeting for approval as it related to confidential staffing matters. The Chairman confirmed he had written to the Clerk concerning the issues discussed.
- 11 Next meeting  
February 12<sup>th</sup> 2008.  
The Chairman would be absent and Cllr Whapham would take the Chair.