

3. **Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda**

Declarations of interest were received from:

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Cllr H Richards | Allotments |
| Cllr Mrs E Cansdale | Prejudicial Interest in the Doctors' Surgery |
| Cllr M Conway | Doctors' Surgery |

4. **Any changes to the Register of Members Interests**

5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2010**

The Clerk had circulated a list of amendments made to the minutes. There being no further amendments, the minutes were declared a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr H Ruse and seconded by Cllr Mrs E Cansdale.

6. **Matters for information not on the agenda**

A request for rose bushes to be planted on the village green instead of a tree was raised. The Chairman said that approximately 12 bushes were to be planted inside the privet hedge.

7. **Report by Cllr Bell, Ashford Borough Council**

Cllr Bell had submitted a report in his absence as follows:

Blue Box Recycling Scheme

Despite the cutbacks, Ashford Borough Council is putting an extra £300,000 into the blue box recycling scheme next year, which means that the service will be available to an additional 9,000 homes in the borough. The scheme works very simply: residents receive a large blue box into which they can place paper, cans and bottles. The box is then placed outside the resident's house every two weeks for collection.

In the past Parish Councils have been worried that this service would impact the recycling money they receive for recycling in the permanent bring points (such as those at the recreation ground). However, the good news is that this form of recycling does not tend to be hugely affected by the introduction of the blue box service.

I must emphasise, that it is by no means certain that Biddenden will be part of the additional 9,000 homes, but I do hope that the Parish Council will support me in trying to make it possible.

I have already been in contact with the Head of Environmental Services and the Portfolio Holder too. I will also talk to the Parish Council chairman, Tom Lupton, about taking the issue forward.”

8. **Proposed Allotments**

A paper had been circulated to councillors. This reported that since the last meeting work on the project has continued in line with the Implementation schedule:

The Tenancy agreement with Mrs Dowsey has been signed by all parties and completed

The LAA Grant Application Acceptance Form has been signed and returned to ABC

The KCC Grant Application Form has been completed and returned to KCC for finalisation and payment

The first 18 names on the waiting list for allotments have been contacted for confirmation they are interested in taking up allotments (deadline 31.12.10 after which if nothing is heard plots will be offered to next name on the waiting list)

The fencing and water contractors contacted to arrange start of work.

During November it is expected the Biddenden Allotment Association will hold its inaugural meeting.

The Chairman reported that the landlord's agent, BTF, will be requesting prepayment for the water connection fee.

9. **High Street Southside Pavement**

A paper on a recent meeting that councillors Lupton and Friend had attended with KCC Cllr Hill had been circulated. It was reported that:

Cllr Hill had requested a meeting with BPC to update the Council on progress with plans for improvements to the Southside Pavement.

Mr Haratbar of the Highways Department outlined the current KCC funding policy for road improvements and remedial work. In essence all projects will need to have demonstrable value. This term would cover improvements such as reducing risk in sites with a proven accident record, and items where improvements would reduce long term maintenance costs.

The Southside pavement does not have a proven accident track record. This is likely to be because it is not heavily used, partly due to its current condition. An added complication in that it is deemed a site of National Significance, and within the public realm. Since May 2010 meetings have been held with ABC and English Heritage. The outcome of which was four options.

It was indicated that KCC favour option C from a technical perspective, but have concerns over the cost, and difficulty in establishing it will meet their funding guidelines. Option C involves lifting of the existing Bethersden Marble, installation of a new drainage system, installation of a new 1.5m wide walking surface adjacent to road using dressed imported stone, relay balance with existing stone.

All the options will require planning permission, and prior to that consultation with adjacent properties and with the wider community. This has not been carried out as yet as it has been considered inappropriate to carry out this exercise until such time as an agreed and funded proposal is developed by KCC.

In discussion it was suggested that KCC needed to give more consideration to movement across from the North to the South side of the High Street. At present the village green is used as an informal "landing bay".

The meeting was also briefed on the proposed new surgery and the need for the pavement network to be upgraded along the west side of Tenterden Road. It was agreed a site map of the surgery would be forwarded to KCC so this can be taken into account.

KCC asked what funds, if any, BPC had to assist with the project. BPC responded that it had £5,700 of funds specifically for the project (donation from KCC). In addition it had £10,000 of funds which had been earmarked for pavement work (it was pointed out to KCC these funds were not as yet committed to the work, as BPC felt it was the responsibility of KCC to maintain pavements). It was also pointed out that BPC has limited funds, and that any contribution made towards this project would be at the expense of carrying out other work within the village.

Given the current financial constraints it was agreed that option C be reworked to take into account the need for improved access across the High Street to the Post Office and the new Surgery, and a proposal developed which KCC was in a position to fund. It will also make clear what, if any elements would be dependant on a BPC contribution, and the justification for this. This exercise would take into account access to the two commercial properties on the Southside pavement, and might be phased to split the work in the listed area from the balance of the proposal. It is hoped BPC will receive the above proposal from KCC by the end of 2011.

KCC pointed out that given their current remit, it was likely they would ask for financial assistance for the project from BPC, to be directed to any new/improvement work.

The report was noted, and it was agreed BPC need take no further action until a proposal is received from KCC.

10. **Doctors' Surgery**

A report had been circulated to councillors.

The contract engaging the services of MHSB, chartered surveyors, has been signed. It is intended that once the Headcorn Practice is in a position to focus on the Biddenden Surgery a meeting will be arranged between all parties.

An article has been written by the Chairman to appear in the Parish Magazine

11. **Gordon Jones Playing Field – Play Area**

Notes on the site meeting held on 16th October had been circulated.

It was reported that repair work on the Triple Tower had been completed.

A working party had been assembled to move and spread the newly delivered bark. Cllr Richards was thanked for moving the bark nearer to the play area. The wire fencing still needed to be repaired and although the hedge by the play area had been cut back, concern was expressed that it had not been cut back enough.

It was noted that a long term plan for the play area needed to be put together, costed and presented. Quotations from builders regarding the outstanding maintenance works were still awaited.

12. **2011 Meeting Dates**

A schedule of meeting dates had been circulated. **The schedule was agreed.**

13. **Reports by Group Chairmen**

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: An order has been raised for the repair of the height restriction barrier and work should commence shortly.

Water has been appearing in the gentlemen's toilets and again and this is being observed. If the situation continues a plumber will be called out to look at the drains again.

The Car Park, Post Office & Toilet Group arranged a meeting for 22nd October to examine the spec for a CCTV system to cover the Car Park, toilets and rear of the Post Office. Councillors Conway, Cansdale, Boulding and Daly attended together with Peter Whapham and an engineer from KSS Security. Home Guard Alarms have also offered their services - a tentative meeting for 10am on Wed 10th November has been arranged to give H G Alarms the same spec - for another quote. The Group will then put forward their recommendation to the full Council for a decision, at the December Council meeting.

The car park hedge has now been trimmed.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: Monies have now been received for grazing and standing grass. An anonymous donation had also been gratefully received to assist the school with access to the footpath and the conservation area.

Work on the demolition of the duck house was likely to cost approximately £750. However, a full breakdown of project costs will be given for approval before the project proceeds..

The new hedge will be mulched before the end of term. The School will be contacted to ask the children to help.

It was noted that John Wheadon does a lot of work on the Millennium Field using his equipment and fuel, and it was suggested that an ex gratia payment would be an appropriate gesture of

appreciation. **It was agreed** that a payment be made but that a decision needs to be made regarding the amount, and this should be brought to the December meeting.

Traffic and Pedestrians: Cllr Friend reported:

Kent Highways have agreed to carry out repairs to the car park entrance even though the piece of land does not seem to be part of the highway. The area has been marked out and we are now awaiting the works to be carried out.

A meeting has been arranged with Jennie Wickenden of Kent Highways on Thursday 11th November to look at a few problems that need looking at. One area is the possibility of the construction of 2 islands at the North and South ends of the Chevrons that mark out the entrance into the Gordon Jones field and Mill Court. This would / should have the effect of slowing traffic down coming from Tenterden and at the same time creating a safer area for traffic waiting to turn into the car park etc. At the same time we would look at the possibility of a crossing from North to Southside pavements at the apex of the village Green. This is also part of the options for the Southside pavement works.

Cllr Friend requested that any councilors with further ideas for works, as Highways currently have capacity for carrying out certain types of work including patching, verge filling, kerbing, pavement works and vegetation clearing.

There is a possibility of receiving a 1 tonne bag of salt / sand for snow and ice clearing. However we would need to store this bag and distribute to areas where local ice problems are prevalent. Discussion took place regarding the location of a salt bin and **it was agreed** that the bin be located on the Sissinghurst Road near the entrance to the Millennium Field. Cllr Friend would contact Kent Highways.

Cllr Friend attended a Community Operations Parish Seminar on the 29th October which was well attended by Kent parishes and was extremely interesting and informative. A copy of the agenda is attached for your information. Full minutes of the meeting produced by Highways will be posted on the web-site and councillors will be informed where and when this can be found.

Concern has been expressed regarding the potholes in the tarmac at the Lynch Gate between the High Street and the church. These will be discussed with Kent Highways. The large pothole in The Meadows still had not been filled.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: It was noted that the Biddenden Blaze had been a great success and that the Parish Council would like to thank BEST for an excellent event. The police had provided a presence and had helped with traffic etc. The Parish Council would also like to express its appreciation for their efforts.

Police Liaison: No meeting has been held. A report from the PCSO has been received this afternoon and a hard copy will be sent to Cllr Conway. A vote of thanks was expressed to the PCSO for her excellent work over the last couple of years and the Parish Council wished her luck in her work with the additional villages.

KALC: The last Parish Forum meeting was postponed and an emergency meeting will be held on 1 December regarding Finance. The recommendations from the Parish Forum will be discussed at the KALC meeting in the middle of December.

Youth: It was reported that Cllrs Cansdale and Richards had stepped down from being signatories on the bank account and that that Cllr Boulding will remain as the sole external signatory. Help is being given to the Youth Club by Ian Brooks and his team from KCC. The Youth Club volunteer leaders are being trained and police checks have been done.

Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: A report had been circulated. Following Kool Kidz deciding to close, the unused Trampoline donated from the Recycling Fund has been returned to the Council. The Recycling Group recommended that this be donated to John Mayne School. **It was agreed** that the trampoline be given to the school. Proposed by Cllr H Ruse and seconded by Cllr H Richards. It was noted that Kool Kidz would, in fact, continue to operate until July.

The trip to Wyecycle is planned for the last Monday in November.

The First Responder Group are putting together the information requested prior to a donation being made.

Information: A report was circulated to all councillors. Cllr Ruse presented a report by the Information Group on the issue of the apparent slope instability at the west end of the squash club building. The lease agreement shows that the demised premises do not include the land surrounding the building and the maintenance of the embankment slope is therefore the responsibility of the Parish Council. Professional advice had been obtained. There is evidence of minor slippages, and the possibility of a partial slip of the whole embankment slope cannot be discounted, which has affected the fencing at the top. Given the use of the slope as an occasional play area, and the potential risk of a major slippage during the wet season, it was recommended that the embankment should be cordoned off with Heras fencing, the condition of the slope monitored over the winter and re-assessed in the spring. Cllr Ruse offered to undertake the monitoring. The Chairman was unhappy with the use of Heras fencing as it is unsightly. However, Cllr Ruse considered that a responsible Council would put health and safety above aesthetics and the Chairman proposed that he and Cllrs Conway and Ruse should meet to discuss the best way forward. **It was agreed** that a meeting be held and a report made to the Council.

Cllr Ruse also summarised a report which he had written regarding the council's purchase of the Jubilee Meadow. The Clerk was asked to circulate a copy of the report after the meeting and **it was agreed** that this be discussed more fully at the December meeting. In the meantime **it was agreed** that the Clerk should write to the Council's solicitors requesting them to obtain copies of the purchase documents and to advise under what legislation the Council had acquired the land. However, before the solicitors commenced this process they were to be asked for an estimate of costs.

Webmaster: Up to date. Nothing to report.

VHMC: Nothing to report.

14. Finance

- a) **Approval of cheques.** The schedule of cheques was presented for approval. **It was agreed** that the cheques be paid. Proposed by: Cllr H Ruse and seconded by Cllr C Daly.
- b) **Donations:** The Chairman of the Finance Committee outlined his concern regarding donations being made to charities and external bodies. He highlighted as an example the donation to a charity on the Payment Schedule which had just been approved and discussed the results of his research into the organisation. He felt that more research should be done into the organisations requesting funding. He proposed that all requests for donations sent to the Council should be forwarded to the Recycling Group to look at and then they should come back to the Council and make recommendations. Any donations should come from the Recycling Fund rather than the tax payer. Proposed by: Cllr A Barfoot and seconded by Cllr K Masters. A vote was taken and the **proposal agreed.**
- c) **Budget Process:** Cllr Barfoot reported that work needs to be done on the 2011/12 budget. All groups needing finance for projects should put a proposal together and give it to Cllr Barfoot as soon as possible. A Finance Committee will be held before the next Parish Council meeting on 14 December, so any requests for finance should be received within the next two weeks.

15. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled

| Application No. | Location and Description | BPC Decision |
|------------------------|---|--|
| 1. 09/01189/AS | Barn north west of Beacon Hill Farm, Benenden Road, Biddenden, Kent. Conversion and extension of a detached former agricultural barn to one unit of self-catering holiday accommodation. Full Planning Permission | Site visit organised for 10 November. Planning Group supported |
| 2. 10/01338/AS | Worsenden farm, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EL. Application for lawful development certificate – proposed development – change of use of land for holding weddings for not more than 28 days of the year. Application for Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development – change of use of land for holding weddings for not more than 28 days of the year. | Site visit organised for 10 November. Planning Group supported |
| 3. 10/01273/AS | Cackle Hill Lakes, Headcorn Road, Biddenden, Kent. Extension of existing coarse fishery lake. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 4. 10/01353/AS | Land east of Corydon, Mockbeggar Lane, Biddenden, Kent. Proposed ¾ bed chalet bungalow. Application for Outline Planning Permission. | Support |
| 5. 10/01482/AS | 7 Church View, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EB. Single storey rear extension and conservatory. Extend existing dropped kerb. Full Planning Permission | Support |

16. **Correspondence**

A list of correspondence had been circulated to councillors. The Chairman asked if there were any items which councillors would like to discuss. There being no items, the Chairman moved to the Action section of the list.

Terms of Business had been received from the Council's solicitors. These documents require a signature to say that the Parish Council accepts their terms of business. **It was agreed** that the Clerk should sign them on behalf of the Parish Council. **It was also agreed** that the Clerk be permitted to write to several other legal firms to request fee details and terms of business to ensure best value.

17. **Items for future consideration**

- a) Information Group paper on the Jubilee Meadow
- b) Findings of the meeting to discuss the land slippage behind the squash club

18. **Date of next meeting:** Open meeting to discuss the Diamond Jubilee to be held on Tuesday 16 November at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Parish Council meeting on Tuesday 14 December 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall. *All Welcome*

The meeting closed at 2136

Alison Swannick – Parish Clerk
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