

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Approved minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 14 September 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair) Cllr C Daly
Cllr A Barfoot Cllr C Friend
Cllr D Boulding Cllr H Richards
Cllr M Conway

Borough Cllr N Bell
Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs E Cansdale, Cllr Evason, Cllr H Ruse.

2. Parishioners' Questions

There were no questions from parishioners

3. Any Declarations of Interest in Items on the Agenda

Declarations of interest were received from:

| | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Cllr M Conway | Drs' surgery |
| Cllr H Richards | Allotments |

4. Changes to the Register of Members' Interests

No changes were received.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2010

No amendments had been received, but a spelling error had been rectified. There being no amendments received the minutes were adopted as being a true and proper record. Proposed: Cllr C Friend Seconded: Cllr M Conway.

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

It was noted that the Help for Heroes event had been very successful. Spencer Conway was also welcomed back to the village after his Round Africa Trip.

7. Report by Cllr Bell, Ashford Borough Council

Cllr Bell reported that ABC was looking at the budget for future years and that there were very strong financial pressures for the concurrent functions paid to the parish councils being cut. The concurrent functions grants are currently being looked at by a working group and whilst cuts are not imminent, they cannot be ruled out.

The planning application for the development of five bungalows in Cheeslands had been granted. It was argued that there were council properties in the village which were not fully occupied and so some people may move into the more appropriately sized bungalows. The planning application had also been granted for the proposed doctors' surgery on the land behind Old Mill Court. It would be sited near the footpath to the school.

A number of meetings between KCC, ABC and other agencies have taken place regarding Woodlands Caravan Park. Cllr Bell was unable to discuss this issue further.

An exchange of emails had taken place regarding cardboard recycling. There is no appropriate site available at the moment as the containers are very large and require large lorries to empty them. Cllr Bell asked that if the parish council knew of any appropriate sites where there was good access for large vehicles, please could it let him know.

Cllr Bell had received an email from the Landshare team. A site was available on a small farm on the High Halden Road for allotments. This site matches people to available land for allotments. The link is www.landshare.net

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bell for his report and asked if there were any questions. The Chairman asked Cllr Bell if the toilet cleaning grant that the council received was separate from concurrent functions. Cllr Bell believed that it was separate but would clarify. Discussion also took place regarding recycling.

8. Proposed Allotments

An Allotment Group Report had been circulated together with financial calculations to all Councillors requesting approval to proceed with the Allotment Project. The paper had also been circulated to representatives of the prospective allotment holders. The Allotment Group had also met on 9th August 2010. The project had also been discussed at the Finance Committee Meeting on 26th August 2010, which recommended that the Council proceed with the project.

The Chairman closed the meeting to ask the Biddenden Allotments Association if they were happy with the proposal as presented, and their representative agreed that the Association was in agreement. The meeting was re-opened.

The Chairman asked councillors if they had any questions. Discussion took place regarding the £2,500 KCC grant from Cllr Hill. It was noted that agreement for this grant could not be given until the parish council had given authorisation for the allotments to proceed. However, the grant could not be guaranteed, but the Parish Council had a legal obligation to endeavour to provide allotments if requested to do so by the appropriate number of parishioners. If the grant is not available it will have to be funded from savings elsewhere.

There was no cost for the insurance, as it would be covered under the existing PC insurance. However, in order to satisfy the landlord's requirements the Biddenden Allotment Association would be required to take out insurance through the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. It was therefore proposed that the annual rent for plots be reduced from £35 to £30 factor in this cost which had previously been expected to be carried by the Council.

The site will have 18 plots and 26 people have indicated an interested in having a plot, so there will be a waiting list. If tenants do not maintain their plots then the plots will be allocated to the next person on the waiting list. It is planned the plots will be ready for use by 1st April 2011.

After further discussion, **it was agreed** that:

The council will proceed with the allotment project at an estimated gross cost of £8,797.81 (including VAT) and a net cost of £ 4,279.02 (excluding VAT) and after grants are deducted. This figure includes a contingency of £230.

Cllr Tom Lupton and Cllr Andrew Barfoot may sign the tenancy agreement between the Council and Mrs Mary Dowsey for approx 0.68 acres of land off North Street, Biddenden.

To approve the use of the tenancy agreement in which the rent is to be set at £30 per year per allotment, to be reviewed annually.

To note that The Allotments annual operating and income statement indicates a net annual surplus to the Council of £ 140 per year, and that this figure does not include any recovery of the development costs.

Proposed by: Cllr M Conway Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding.

It was agreed that the Clerk should be the future point for communications regarding the allotments.

An implementation timetable will be prepared.

9. **Co-option**

It was reported that one application had been received. **It was agreed unanimously** to co-opt the Keith Masters to the Council. Proposed by: Cllr H Richards Seconded by: Cllr M Conway.

The Clerk was asked to ensure that Cllr K Masters received all the necessary papers and documents before the October meeting.

10. **High Street Southside Pavement**

It was reported that nothing new had occurred since the last PC meeting.

11. **Proposed Doctors' Surgery**

A paper had been circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting, written by the Chairman in consultation with the Clerk. The Chairman led the meeting through the paper.

Planning Permission

It was noted that planning permission had been granted for the Biddenden surgery by ABC.

Communications

The Chairman reported that since the paper had been written he had spoken with Dr Winch who is concerned that the Council and parishioners are realistic about the timescale for building the surgery. Work was currently being channelled into the new Headcorn practice building and it was hoped that building work on this would start by 1st November 2010. Once work is underway on the Headcorn Surgery the Doctors would be in a position to start making arrangements to implement the Biddenden Surgery project, and to meet with the Council.

It was noted the Clerk would be meeting with the Practice Manager on 21st September, where communications would be discussed in more detail.

Appointment of Chartered Surveyor

It was reported that steps had been taken to appoint a chartered surveyor to represent the Council's interests in implementing the surgery project. Letters had been sent to four companies, together with the project Procedural Checklist. To-date only one had expressed an interest and the Clerk was requested to chase those that had not replied.

It was agreed to arrange a meeting with interested companies, as the first step in the selection process, and then report recommendations back to the Council. Attendees would be: Cllrs Lupton; Friend; Daly; Boulding and the Clerk. Cllr Richards would be on the reserve list.

Review of Correspondence relating to the Surgery Project

It was reported that the Chairman and Clerk had reviewed the correspondence relating to the surgery was reviewed.

It was noted that the list of donors to the 2002 appeal to purchase the Millennium Field, together with amounts received had been identified. It had previously been reported that the Council did not have these details.

The letter from West Kent Primary Care Trust of 16th July 2008 providing support in principle to Headcorn Surgery to relocate the Biddenden Branch Surgery to its new site was noted. Although noted as being received in the correspondence list in the Council's Minutes of 12th August 2008, it is not mentioned as having been noted by the council.

Audit Commission Letter of 8th December 2008

It was reported that the Audit Commission's letter of 8th December 2008 suggested the Council should consider obtaining legal opinion as to whether from a public law point of view, there is any encumbrance to the council using the land as proposed.

The Council sought advice from its solicitor, who advised contacting KALC. The Council wrote to KALC on 31st December 2008, and received a response on 14th January 2009 in which KALC requested further information concerning the purchase of the field before being in a position to give an opinion. There is no record of this letter having been presented to Council or of a response being made to KALC.

It was reported that the purchase agreement for the Jubilee Meadow could not be found in the council's records and the Council's solicitors did not appear to have a copy either.

It was agreed that the Clerk be requested to obtain a copy of the purchase agreement, and that the matter should be referred to the Information Group to recommend the next steps to be taken before going back to KALC.

Title Deeds

It was reported that the solicitors for the Headcorn practice had requested the title deeds for the various properties involved in the lease. A decision was required as

to whether the Council were willing to release these documents at this stage. **It was agreed** to ask the Council's solicitors to release the title deeds to the solicitors for the Headcorn practice.

Management of the Surgery Project

The Chairman suggested that once appointed the Chartered Surveyor should report into the Clerk, and that any matters requiring approval from the Council be referred back through the clerk in the normal way. **This was agreed.**

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

A paper had been circulated to all councillors.

The RoSPA inspection had taken place on 15 July. It was reported that one item had been identified as High/Medium risk and four items identified as being of medium risk.

A general discussion on the play area concluded that the Council needs to consider replacing the current facilities as a major project, however this project would not happen until at least 2011/12

It was agreed:

The Clerk be authorised to arrange the repair of the high risk item as soon as possible (Triple Tower Slide).

Quotations be obtained for the remaining four items, and that the fencing be left around the toddlers' area but removed elsewhere

A group consisting of Cllrs Masters, Friend and Boulding be formed to develop a proposal to replace the existing play area and bring the proposals and costings for the 2011/12 budget to the November Meeting. Cllr Conway would look into grant funding.

14. **Reports by Group Chairmen**

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The report had been circulated. The Clerk reported that further vandalism had been reported in the toilets. New locks were now required for all the toilets and an electrician had been asked to look at the hand dryers as the fronts had been pulled off and put down the toilets.

It was agreed to obtain quotations for CCTV.

Discussion took place regarding the cleaning of the toilets. **It was agreed** that an advertisement be put out asking for someone to clean the toilets daily – hours of

work to be negotiated. They should be paid at the same rate as the Lengthsman and would be employed rather than contracted.

It was reported that the Deed of Variation for the Post Office rental agreement had been signed.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow Group: Minutes of the group meeting held on 7th September 2010 were circulated.

It was noted that the group recommended that the proposed Environmental Centre project be held in abeyance as the Surgery is to be built on the site, and that the future of funding from Natural England is due to be reviewed. **This was agreed.**

It was stated that the duck shed was in a poor state of repair. The tiles would be taken off the roof. However, the Clerk was asked to investigate if planning permission was required to demolish the old duck shed.

A reply was awaited from DEFRA on the working for a permissive and licensed access for the footpath by the school and the garden/field.

It was noted that quotations would be obtained for winter hedge laying work.

It was noted that in preparing the MF/JM budget for 2011/2 the group will consider the level of reserves which need to be held by the Council to fund the maintenance of the fields.

Traffic and Pedestrians: A report had been circulated to councillors. It was reported that the speed review had been suspended. There were also going to be works carried out on the Tenterden Road, Cranbrook and the Clerk had been asked to send a note to Jacobs requesting that a diversion is not put down Fosten Lane.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: It was reported that a new padlock was required for the gate to the fence.

Tenterden Tigers wished to use the playing field on 11/12 June. **It was agreed** that the matter would be discussed with the other teams and the Village Halls Management Committee as use of the changing rooms and other facilities needed to be sorted out.

Police Liaison: The last meeting had been deferred.

KALC and Parish Forum: The next meeting is 6 October. It was noted that a petition was being sent to Government to reduce the speed on unclassified roads from 60 mph to 50 mph. This had the backing of the Department of Transport. Statistics showed that that 60% of in-car deaths occurred on single carriage roads.

A reduction of 10 mph was expected to reduce deaths by 50%.

Now that the Custody Suite has been moved from Ashford to Folkestone, there is a proposal to close the Magistrates Court in Ashford, which will cause a loss of policemen on the streets as they would have to accompany prisoners to Folkestone.

Youth: Nothing to report.

Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: A paper had been circulated to all councillors. A meeting had been held on 9 August. It was proposed that the following awards be made:

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Biddenden Junior FC | £200 for new goals |
| Biddenden AFC | £197 for League and KCFA Fees |
| First Responder | £400 but more information needed before sending |
| BPC | £200 towards Gordon Jones Car Park repairs |
| BPC | £50 for marking out the recycling area |
| BPC | £200 for the establishing the allotments |

These payments were agreed.

A visit to Wye Cycle is planned.

The issue of the trampoline bought for Kool Kidz has been raised. It would appear that it has not been used. **It was agreed** to defer this item until the next meeting when Cllr Ruse would be present.

Information: It was reported that Cllr Boulding would fill the vacancy for a member of the Information Group due to the passing of Cllr Ashcroft.

Webmaster: Up to date. Three sets of minutes have been amended commencing from April 2007.

VMHC: The next meeting is on 16 September.

15. **Finance**

- a) Approval of cheques for Payment. **It was agreed** that the cheques payment schedule be approved for payment as presented. Proposer: Cllr C Daly Second: Cllr M Conway.

It was noted that Suzy Daly would be stepping down as a tree warden.

- b) Unapproved Minutes of the Finance Committee – 26 August 2010. The unapproved minutes were presented to the meeting. Discussion took place on budgets. **It was agreed** to retain the services of the current Internal Auditor.

The issue regarding a parishioner's letter relating to the council's insurance was dealt with, and it was established that insurance against loss of rental was not available.

- c) Post Office Rent Review. It was reported that the new Deed of Variation had been signed.
- d) Accounts system. It was reported that the Internal Auditor had recommended a system called Scribe as an alternative to the excel worksheets currently used. Discussion took place regarding the various systems. The Clerk had been to see a version of Scribe in action at Paddock Wood and had recommended its use. **It was agreed** that the Clerk should order the new system.

16. **Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled**

| | Application No. | Location and Description | Decision |
|----|------------------------|---|-----------------|
| 1. | 10/00127/TP (DEL) | 2 North Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AQ. G1-5 Poplars to be reduce by a third. Town & Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended); Town & Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999 | Support |
| 2. | 10/01048/AS | Park Farm, Frittenden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LQ. Proposed enlargement of storage warehouse. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 3. | 10/00117/TC (DEL) | Wykeham House, High Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AH. 1) 3 x cypress & 1 Laurel – to fell. 2) Horse Chestnut – crown thin and reduce by 30%. 3) Hedge along southern boundary – fell or reduce surviving trees/hedging to about 2m, replant with mixed hedging or yew. 4) Multi-stemmed laurel – remove stem nearest house, crown thin, reduce remainder by 30%. Notification to carry out work to trees in a conservation area | Support |
| 4. | 10/01116/AS | Roberts Farm, Smarden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ. Installation of 1.m high entrance gates. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 5. | 10/01053/AS | West Ongley Cottage, Ongley Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8HF. Extension of time of planning consent 07/02196/AS for a replacement dwelling and garage. Application to Extend Time period of Permission | Support |

| Application No. | Location and Description | Decision |
|------------------------|--|-----------------|
| 6. | 10/01113/AS 24 Glebelands, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EA. Single storey rear extension to provide bedroom & ensuite. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 7. | 10/01112/AS Moonrakers, Mockbeggar Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8ES. Proposed double garage with storage above and log store to side. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 8. | 10/01121/AS Frogshole Barn, Sissinghurst Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EY. Creation of an ensuite bathroom and walk-in wardrobe to first floor. Conversion of integral garage to bedroom and creation of ensuite shower room to ground floor. Installation of 2 new velux roof lights to rear SE elevation and to side NE elevation. Replacement of the velux roof lights with conservation roof lights. Listed Building Consent | Support |
| 9. | 10/01191/AS Medhurst Farm, Fosten lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DZ. Detached garage with home office above. Full Planning Permission | Support |
| 10 | 10/01246/AS Land between Cheeselands and Sandeman Way, Biddenden, Kent. Residential development comprising two number two bedroom semi-detached houses, four number three bedroom houses, four number four bedroom houses with access road, ancillary parking and private open space. Full Planning Permission | Site Visit |

17. **Correspondence**

The Correspondence schedule had been circulated to all councillors, and letters under “Action” were discussed.

It was reported that a letter had been received from the Audit Commission closing its investigation into the BPOLG/BPOLC.

An update was given on the ongoing police investigation.

13. **Diamond Jubilee**

It was suggested that a meeting be held for village organisations and villagers at the end of October/early November to discuss how the village wished to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee in 2012. This will be discussed further at the next meeting.

18. **Items for Future Consideration**

(a) Diamond Jubilee

19. **Date of Next Meeting:** Parish Council meeting, Tuesday 12 October 2010 at
7.30 pm, Village Hall, Biddenden
All Welcome

The meeting closed at 10.15 pm

Mrs A Swannick 01580 890750
Parish Clerk