

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Approved minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 11 January 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden

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

3 parishioners attended

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Daly, Masters and Ruse due to work commitments and Cllr Evason due to illness.

Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Bell and Cllr Richards. The Chairman stated that item 7, Cllr Bell's report, would be taken upon his arrival.

2. Parishioners' questions

The parishioner read out a statement relating to Cllr Daly in response to another parishioner's questions at the Parish Council meeting on 14 December 2010 relating to Code of Conduct matters.

The parishioner's statement covered the parishioner's former voluntary position as Tree Warden. The statement also covered Cllr Daly's position regarding the Drs' surgery. This is reported in full as follows:

"Further, the same member of the public claims that my husband should declare an interest in the doctor's surgery. The only interest he has is in seeing that Biddenden has an up to date surgery rather than a small room in the village hall, something that was overwhelmingly endorsed by the village as a whole. He has no financial interest whatsoever, nor any interest in a particular site, nor a personal interest as to the personnel involved."

"I'd like to ask the Parish Council to record in the minutes which councillors vote for or against decisions involving the doctor's surgery as I feel the village has a right to know this information".

The Chairman thanked the parishioner. The question by the parishioner at the December 2010 meeting related to the payment made to BTCV, which was a donation by the Parish Council.

With regard to the issue relating to the Code of Conduct and the Drs' Surgery, the Chairman stated that this matter did not fall within the remit of Biddenden Parish Council. The Parish Council has a complaints procedure which clearly states that any concerns relating to or complaints against a councillor regarding code of conduct issues should be made to the Monitoring Officer at Ashford Borough Council. Cllr Daly had been given the opportunity at the meeting held on 14 December to answer the parishioner's questions and he had declined to do so.

The Chairman stated that the request to minute Councillors names when voting on decision affecting the surgery would be considered as and when decisions were taken.

There were no further questions from the floor.

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

The Clerk referred to the Agenda items and Group Reports paper circulated to councillors.

Following the letter from a parishioner dated 30 December 2010, all councillors are requested to give reasons for their interests in items on the agenda in accordance with section 1w of the Council's Standing Orders as follows:

"An interest arising from the code of conduct adopted by the Council, the existence and nature of which is required to be disclosed by a Councillor at a meeting shall be recorded in the minutes."

The following declarations were received:

Cllr Mrs E Cansdale Prejudicial interest in the Doctors' Surgery as she is employed by the Headcorn Practice.

Cllr M Conway Doctors Surgery. His property is situated within 200m of the development.

Cllr H Richards stated he had previously declared an interest in the allotments as he had been the tenant on the land now leased to the council. He no longer has an interest as the lease agreement with the Council has been signed and is now in effect.

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

There were no changes to the Register.

5. **Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2010**

Amendments made to the unapproved minutes had been circulated to councillors. There being no further comments or amendments, **it was agreed** that the minutes were a true and proper record. Proposed by: Cllr M Conway Seconded by: Cllr Mrs E Cansdale.

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

The subject of grit boxes was raised but this was to be brought up under Items for future consideration.

8. **Model Publication Scheme**

The updated Information Publication Scheme document had previously been circulated. **It was agreed** that the finalised budget could be put onto the website. **It was agreed** to adopt the Information Publication Scheme document with inclusive of amendments made as discussed.

9. **Annual Risk Assessment**

The document had been previously circulated. It was a requirement for the Audit Commission that this document is reviewed annually. It will again be reviewed as part of the Annual Statutory Meeting.

The Clerk was requested to draft a Business Continuity plan.

Amendments were made to page 6, Members Interests and page 7, Data Protection. **It was agreed** that the document be accepted inclusive of the amendments made at the meeting.

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

10. **CCTV**

The CCTV proposal had not been received, but it was understood that it would be submitted to the Information Group shortly prior to being presented to the Council.

11. **High Street Southside Pavement**

A report had been due by the end of December, but this had not been received. The Clerk was requested to contact Cllr Hill (KCC).

12. **Doctors' Surgery**

Cllr Cansdale left the room.

It was noted that the site had now been pegged out. There has been no further action to report. The first invoice from the Council's chartered surveyor has been sent to the Headcorn Practice for reimbursement.

Cllr Bell arrived at the meeting and his agenda item was taken next. Cllr Richards also arrived and was asked about his declaration of interest.

An email has been received from Invicta Chartered Surveyors saying that the site investigations have come back and they are now working up the design for the building. One thing which has been confirmed is that they will be putting in private drainage. Invicta's discussions with neighbours in adjoining properties suggest that there are ongoing problems with the mains drainage serving the houses in Old Mill Court which haven't been rectified since they were built so they are inclined to steer clear of connecting into their services.

Invicta are currently working on the Heads of Terms, as set out in the procedural checklist. However, the Council has not yet received the timetable as requested in minute 5.2 of the meeting held on 30 November 2010. MHSB have been requested to follow this up on the Council's behalf. No fee bill has been received for the last month.

Discussion took place regarding the meeting to be held in March and the heads of terms. Concern was expressed regarding actions being taken without reference to the council. It was pointed out that the proposed meeting was not being organised by the Parish Council, and not under its remit, and that the Council would consider the Heads of Terms once input had been received from MHSB, the Council's surveyors, and at that point agree the next steps to be taken.

13. **Jubilee Committee**

It was reported that a meeting would be held on 17 February at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

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

Cllr Bell reported that over the next few years changes would be implemented affecting social, council and housing association tenants with the introduction of fixed term tenancies. In other words to remove the life time tenancy agreements for new tenants. Those who currently hold a life time tenancy will not be affected.

Tenancies will be for fixed periods and it will allow for redistribution of housing stock and change of circumstances, ie one person living in a three bedroomed house could be moved to a smaller property. This proposal is currently out for consultation.

Cllr Bell also confirmed that £3,000 was in the ABC budget for the toilet grant for next year.

A coffee break was taken.

14. **Reports by Group Chairmen**

Car Park, toilets and Post Office: The Council has now employed a cleaner and she started on 5 January. The obscenities on the inside of the door to the gent's toilet cubicle have been painted over. It was reported that there was also some scribbling in the grouting and that the gents door wasn't locking, although it was shutting. **It was agreed** that an evening visit would be undertaken to ensure the doors were locking.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: The hedge laying has been chased up. There is currently a back log of work, and it will be divided into three sections. Three quotes are to be sought.

It was reported that the claim for school usage had been submitted with five examples of educational usage of the pond area. However, Natural England had considered one report too short and had therefore agreed to pay for four rather than five, amounting to £400.

A working party is to meet on 5 February to spread the bark chippings.

Traffic and Pedestrians: The pothole at the entrance to the car park has been filled and also the drain on Headcorn Road.

A parishioner has commented upon the bus stop at Woodlands. The Parish Council wrote last April and nothing has so far been done. This will be followed up with Kent Highways.

It was noted that the speed sign was back and it was also noted that it did slow down the traffic.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: Motorcycles have been seen riding on the field and the fence into the Millennium Field has been damaged.

It was reported that quotes were being obtained to stabilise the bank. However, a meeting had yet to be organised with Cllr Ruse and this would be done.

A meeting will be arranged with South East Water to discuss the current metering arrangements. Cllr Richards asked to attend the meeting.

Police Liaison: Since Sgt McNeil's departure no meetings had been held. The parish no longer has a dedicated PCSO.

KALC and Parish Forum: Both meetings were postponed due to bad weather. The next meeting of the Parish Forum will be on 2 February.

Youth: Paperwork to transfer the bank account had been sent off. The youth club meets on the 3rd Tuesday of the month.

Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: Nothing to report. Hope to have a presentation at the February meeting from ABC.

Information: The letter to KALC/NALC regarding the Jubilee Meadow, enclosing relevant documents has been sent and a reply is awaited.

Website: Up to date.

Village Hall Management Committee: Nothing to report.

Allotments: A final cheque made payable to South East Water has been sent to BTF as requested. Replies from all Allotment holders have now been received regarding their pot and two plots have been offered to the next on the waiting list. The plots have now been marked out. It was noted that the fencing needed to be done as soon as possible.

Play Area: It was reported that a meeting was to be held on Monday 17 January. There was a possibility of applying for a grant but the Play Area proposal had to be fully planned and costed before it could be submitted and no plan was currently in place.

15. **Finance**

The letter regarding the precept and concurrent functions, dated 11 December, was received on 15 December, after the last meeting.

As previously circulated to councillors by email on 18 December, the following paragraph was contained within the letter relating to code of conduct complaints in relation to parish councillors:

“You should be aware that the Borough Council may seek to reduce grant payments to the extent of any investigations costs which have to be met by the borough council into code of conduct complaints in relation to your Parish Councillors. Such costs are usually at least £2-3000 per investigation and can be considerably more in large cases.”

ABC has confirmed that the concurrent grant for 2011/12 will be £1040. This figure is expected to reduce by a further 22.5% over the next three years.

Discussion took place regarding the code of conduct issue. The Chairman advised the meeting that advice had been sought from KALC, and this was read to the meeting, and he considered it inappropriate to take any further action at this stage.

It was agreed unanimously that the list of cheques be approved for payment.
 Proposer: Cllr C Friend Seconded: Cllr M Conway.

16. **Planning**

The following plans were considered by the full council.

Case No	Parish	Decision	Location and Description
10/01695/AS	Biddenden	Support	Hendon Hall, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BB Two new dormer windows to south elevation. One new timber casement to window to north elevation and one new timber casement window to south elevation
10/01696/AS	Biddenden	Support	Hendon Hall, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BB Interior alterations to Hendon Hall to provide additional bedrooms within the second floor, improved second floor access and new windows, dormer windows and skylights at second floor level. Alterations at first floor to provide improved bathroom facilities, and at ground floor to provide improved living accommodation.

Case No	Parish	Decision	Location and Description
10/01721/AS	Biddenden	Support	Roberts Farm, Smarden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ Reinstatement of wagon porch
10/01722/AS	Biddenden	Support	Roberts Farm, Smarden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ Reinstatement of wagon porch
10/0173/AS	Biddenden	Support	Celandine, 9 Cot Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JB Rear two storey extension and addition of two traditional dormer windows to front elevation

17. Correspondence

The Clerk read out details of the correspondence for Action.

30 December Letter from a parishioner regarding the Code of Conduct. No further action is required by the Council at this stage as complaints against councillors are dealt with in clause 4.1 of the Council's Complaints procedure as follows:

4.1 This policy does not cover Code of Conduct complaints against an individual Councillor, which should be addressed to *The Monitoring Officer, Legal & Democratic Services, Ashford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL*. The Monitoring Officer can only deal with Code of Conduct complaints about the behaviour of a Councillor and failure to follow the Code. He will not deal with complaints about matters that are not covered by the Councillors Code of Conduct.

Councillors were asked to note Agenda item 3 and Agenda item 15 on the Agenda Items and Group Reports sheet.

The Chairman asked councillors for further comments. Councillors considered the list of Received and Sent correspondence. There were no further comments.

18. Items for future consideration

a) Salt Bins. Cllr Friend undertook to do some research.

19. **Date of next meeting** Parish Council meeting, Tuesday 8 February at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall
All welcome

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm.
Alison Swannick, Parish Clerk

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