

BIDDENEN PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 13 December 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair) Cllr B Hewitt
 Cllr Mrs E Cansdale Cllr A Lidgett
 Cllr C Friend Cllr H Ruse
 Cllr P Harris Cllr J Tydeman

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

2 parishioners attended.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Boulding as he was on holiday and Borough Cllr Bell. Cllr Ruse advised the meeting that he needed to leave the meeting at 9pm.

2. **Parishioners' questions**

A parishioner noted the proposal by Ashford Borough Council to close public toilets in the borough. He urged BPC not to close the Parish Council's public toilets, and to provide the necessary financial support.

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

Cllr C Friend Personal interest in the planning application for 21 Glebelands as he lived close by.

Cllr A Lidgett Personal interest in the planning application for Stede Court Farm as he lived close by.

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

There were no changes to the Register of Members Interests.

5. **Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 8 November 2011**

The Clerk read out the amendments made to the minutes. It was noted that Cllr Hewitt had given her apologies for the meeting. The minutes were manually amended. There being no further amendments to the minutes they were approved

as being a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by Cllr Ruse
Seconded by Cllr Friend. **Unanimous.**

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

There were no matters for information not on the agenda.

7. **Co-option selection process**

The Clerk read out the process for selection (previously circulated). There had only been one applicant for the two positions and therefore the applicant, Mr Hunt was asked to say tell the Council about himself. Once this was completed councillors asked Mr Hunt questions. A public vote was then taken and Mr Hunt was unanimously co-opted. It was explained to him that the Clerk would now forward his details on to ABC who would, in turn, be in touch and send some forms. The Clerk would ensure that he had copies of relevant documents and he would be able to sit as a councillor at the meeting on 10 January 2012. One vacancy still remains.

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

There was no report as Cllr Bell had sent his apologies. The Clerk was asked to ask Cllr Bell for updates on the following:

- a) Business rates and his discussion with local businesses
- b) Recycling presentation
- c) Visit to the new houses in Chulkhurst

9. **CCTV**

The Clerk had circulated a paper detailing the maintenance costs for the toilets for the last two years. It was noted that if CCTV reduced the damage to the toilets then it would pay for itself.

It was reported that after the meeting on 8 November there was a query from a parishioner as to whether the resolution was clear to parishioners present.

It was Resolved at the last meeting that the lowest quotation be accepted and has been approved in the minutes of 8 November. However, the motion that the lowest quotation be accepted is endorsed at this meeting so that it is clear to everyone. Proposed by Cllr J Tydeman Seconded by Cllr A Lidgett.
Agreed by 5 councillors (Cllrs Lupton, Cansdale and Hewitt were not at the meeting on 8 November and Cllr Boulding did not vote as he had declared an interest).

10. **Parish Plan**

An initial meeting of the Steering Group took place on 22 November. A temporary chairman has been elected and the group will be meeting again on 12 January at 8.00 pm

The Steering Group is not a Parish Council body, and will have its own constitution (on the advice of Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) who are guiding and providing assistance to the Group for the Community Led Plan). Cllrs Lidgett, Harris and Lupton are Parish Council representatives on the Group. It is hoped that membership of the group will be widened at the next meeting.

It was noted that one of the chairmen on VHMC would be prepared to join the steering group. It was confirmed that £3000 had been received from KCC towards the cost of the plan. This money would need to be passed onto the Steering Group.

11. **High Street Southside Pavement**

A meeting was held by KCC Highways and Jacobs. There are still a lot of things to be considered in terms of detailed design work, materials and agreement from the Conservation officers. With this in mind, KCC Highways hope to be on site by Spring 2012.

It was noted that Cllr Friend had met with a parishioner to discuss drainage problems relating to Claris's and it had been suggested that perhaps the paving could be re-levelled. Cllr Friend would be writing to Kent Highways regarding the issue.

12. **Review of Complaints Procedure**

It was RESOLVED to adopt the Complaints Procedure. Proposed by Cllr Friend Seconded by Cllr Cansdale. **Unanimous**. It was noted that all policies are reviewed annually at the Statutory Annual Meeting.

As Cllr Ruse needed to leave by 9pm the Chairman took Agenda item 14 before item 13.

14. **Finance**

a) To approve the cheques for payment

The list of cheques for approval had been circulated for approval. Proposed by Cllr Hewitt Seconded by Cllr Friend. **Unanimous**

In addition it was RESOLVED that Christmas boxes for the Lengthsman (£50) and the Cleaner (£25) be approved. **Agreed unanimously**

b) Unapproved minutes of the Finance Committee held on 6 December 2011. To look at the recommendations made by the Committee.

The unapproved minutes of the Finance Committee were to be noted by the Council. They would be formally approved by the Finance Committee at the next meeting. The unapproved minutes could go on the website. **Agreed.**

It was noted that a subsidence questionnaire was to be completed for insurers as for some reason it had not been included in the insurance policy at inception.

It was noted that the lease for the post office was due for renewal in July. The Council was asked for permission for the Clerk to approach solicitors for advice on next steps. **Agreed**

It was recommended that with effect from 1st April 2012 there be a 5% increase in the fees for:

- Charges for use of facilities
- Rent of the Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow
- Allotment rents

Proposer: Cllr H Ruse Seconder: Cllr P Harris. **Unanimous**

Squash Club embankment: A meeting was held between Cllrs Friend, Boulding and Ruse to consider what would be the best course of action. It was recommended that Cllr Ruse prepare a specification for a tall fence around the top of the embankment and for signs to be put on the south and west sides of the fence. **Agreed**

Precept: It was recommended that the precept level remain at £47,500

c) **To discuss the budget 2012/13 (circulated)**

It was noted that a decision on the budget and the precept level were required.

It was noted that an estimated cost of £6,000 had been put into budget to cover the costs for the Audit Commission investigation due to an objection made to the Commission regarding the 2010/11 accounts by a parishioner. It was also noted that due to the investigation these accounts had not yet been approved by the Commission.

It was noted that the South East Water charges for the Gordon Jones Playing Field had been taken over by VHMC. The Parish Council contribution to the water bills in 2011/12 was £500. It was noted that no contribution was included in the 2012/3 Budget.

CCTV maintenance figures had been added.

It was estimated that toilet maintenance would reduce with the introduction of CCTV.

It was noted the forecast for the following three years was cash neutral and was disappointing in that it included no major projects. However, in future this may change once we have feedback from the Community Led Plan.

It was RESOLVED to keep maintain the precept at £47,500 as recommended by the Finance Committee. Proposed by Cllr H Ruse Seconded by Cllr C Friend.
Unanimous

It was RESOLVED to adopt the Budget for 2012/13 as presented. Proposed by Cllr H Ruse Seconded by Cllr P Harris. **Unanimous**

13. **Reports by Clerk, Group Chairmen and Parish Council Representatives**

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The drains have been blocked in the ladies' and so the plumbers came out to clear the drains. A repair has also taken place to the pipes behind the toilet.

Salt bins: It was reported that KCC had provided salt bins at Dashmonden and Chulkhurst. It was therefore **agreed** that two bins be purchased by the Council to be placed at the bottom of the church footpath at Glebelands and in the Post Office/Toilets car park.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: Work is continuing on the repairs to benches etc on the Millennium Field. The willows have now been pollarded and the wood chipped.

Two quotations have been received for the removal of the Duck House. Three are required and so the Council will be going out for re-quotation. The name of a possible contractor was to be forwarded to the Clerk.

Traffic Pedestrians and Footpaths: Enquiries are taking place regarding the cost of Salt/grit bins. New bins have been provided by Kent Highways to Dashmonden and Chulkhurst.

An email had now been received approving a sign for the recreation ground at Gordon Jones playing Field. Cllr Friend had been trying to contact the KCC approved suppliers.

The bus stop had been closed by KCC whilst road works took place but had failed to take the sign cover away. Aviva did not want to know.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: Refurbishment of the play area/equipment was discussed. Three quotations had been requested giving exactly the same brief. After consideration it was RESOLVED to ask Bridglands to carry out the work but that the Clerk and Cllr Friend should meet with them to go through the quotation prior to work starting.

The contract for mowing and hedge requirements has now been received for 2012 from KCC. It totals £1324.84 plus VAT. Should further work be required then the cost will obviously increase. Agreement for the Clerk to sign and return the contract is requested.

It was RESOLVED that the mowing contract be renewed and that the Clerk should sign it. **Agreed**

A meeting is to be arranged with Biddenden Juniors to discuss their proposals for the playing field.

Squash Court embankment: Please see under Finance Committee report.

Police Liaison: Nothing to report. The Clerk was requested to ask Sgt McNeil for her quarterly report. PCSO Moorey was to be invited to the meeting on 10 January.

KALC: The Chairman attended the Ashford Area Committee on 30th November. The main topic of discussion was the likely impact of the Localism Act.

It is not clear when the different parts of the Act will come into effect, and in many areas there will need to be clear rules set out, and voted on again by parliament before implementation. Having said this it is expected the bulk of the Act will become effective from April 2012. The general view of the meeting was that Council's needed:

- To keep abreast of developments, and that Ashford Area Committee would assist via ensuring there is dialogue with ABC.
- Recognise that the ability of Councils to take on additional tasks was dependent on having adequate manpower resources. This would vary from Council to Council (for example larger Town Councils already carry out many functions, and small rural parishes virtually none, and have little scope to realise any economies of scale).

Councillors have already been circulated with "A plain English guide to the Localism Act" (issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government).

Workshop on Supporting Communities and Responding to Planning Applications

The Chairman attended a workshop on 1st December run by CPRE, ACRK and KALC. In addition to general discussion on the Localism Act, it focused on the likely changes in the planning process.

An area we need to be aware of is "major developments" - ie groups of houses rather than infills. In general major developments are expected to take place on sites identified within the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF only included one site in Biddenden, the land adjacent to Sandeman Way, and this has already been granted planning permission. However, the ABC LDF document (completed in 2010) did not get approval from the Government inspector, and is now being revised to produce a Core Strategy, and will then be resubmitted for approval. Before the new document is approved ABC is required to go through a consultation process. It is suggested the Clerk write to ABC to request details of how it is planned to carry out the review, and the points at which BPC will be consulted.

During the day the importance of having a Community Led Plan was emphasised. It was also stated that the role of the plan may expand to include "The Neighbourhood Plan" - a document which can be submitted to ABC to inform planning decisions. The mechanism for this is not yet clear, but it is expected that it will allow the contents of documents such as the "Village Design Statement" to be included, and require formal consideration by ABC when approving planning applications (at present the document does not have to be considered as it has no legal status).

It is suggested that KALC be approached to address the Council on the impact of the Localism Act. Agreed

Planning and Local Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: There has been an issue with the paper recycling not being collected and a surplus of waste paper being left by the bin. This was not collected and a parishioner had to tidy the area. The bin was also not put back properly – photographs of both were taken. ABC has been contacted and sent the photographs. ABC have acted and contacted Aylesford Paper. The bin will be put back properly the next time that the recycling is collected. They should take away the excess paper in future. Details of the Christmas rubbish and recycling collections were to be put on the notice boards and website.

Jubilee Celebrations: A meeting had been held on 2 November. A possible timetable of activities is:

- Thursday 31st May** Jubilee Choral evening provided by visiting choirs in the Church
- Saturday 2nd June** History Society Exhibition and Film Show to run all day in village halls
Football Club tournament
Squash Club Hog Roast and Disco
- Sunday 3rd June** Afternoon Street Picnic with stalls and entertainment
Evening Band in the Red Lion
- Monday 4th June** John Mayne events – Open Air Theatre / Mini Olympics
Sports Day / Static Hot Air Balloon
Tea dancing in the Village Hall
Royal Quiz Night in the Red Lion
Lighting of the beacon to join up with the National chain of beacons

BEST would not be holding the Biddenden Olympics but would be doing a Jubilee themed blaze in November.

Village Hall Management Committee: VHMC wanted to update and review the signs on the side of the squash club. It was agreed the Clerk was to give them the new mobile number for the Parish Council, and finalise arrangements for the new sign.

15. Planning

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
11/01321/AS	Biddenden	21 Glebelands, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EA Construction of a single storey side extension and porch	Support
11/01320/AS	Biddenden	Roberts Farm, Smarden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ Variation to the roof ridge line to avoid dormer window	Support
11/01344/AS	Biddenden	Goldwell Farmhouse, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BP Replace the water damaged pine floor and oak strips with solid oak floorboards in	Support

		dining room	
11/01368/AS	Biddenden	Stede Court Farm, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JG Single storey rear extension with cat-slide roof	Support
11/01369/AS	Biddenden	Stede Court Farm, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JG Single storey rear extension with cat-slide roof and internal alterations	Support
NATTRAN/SE/S247/349	Biddenden	Department of Transport application for proposed stopping up of highway at Cheeslands, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8HL	Support

NEW TREE APPLICATIONS

Case No	Parish	Location and Description
11/00226/TP	Biddenden	34 The Meadows, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AW T1 Oak tree - crown reduction 20%, crown thin 20%

16. Correspondence

Action

- 8 December KALC Chairman's Conference – circulated.
7 January, 2012, Lenham Community Centre. **Chairman to attend.**
- December An email has been received from All Saints asking if a councillor would be prepared to read a lesson in church on 18 December at 6pm. The reading is from Luke Chapter 2 verses 1 - 7. It will be the third lesson to be read and will follow *Angels from the Realms of Glory*. A number of local organizations are being asked to read. **Chairman to do reading.**
- 2 December A letter has been received from the ICO stating that the case regarding the Minutes and the Information Group has now been closed. (Circulated). Councillors were reminded that all correspondence relating to council business in an official capacity is subject to request under the Freedom of Information Act and should be copied to the Clerk for record purposes.
- 1 December ABC Consultation on the Kent County Council household Waste Recycling Centre Service. The document is available to householders on www.kent.gov.uk/hwrconsultation. Views to the

proposals by email or writing are required by 9 February 2012.
Details to be put on the website

25 November A letter has been received from the Audit Commission regarding the objection by a parishioner regarding the 2010/11 Annual Accounts. Answers to some 33 questions have been requested by the Audit Commission all relating specifically to the Drs Surgery (Circulated). A reply is being worked on. **It was agreed** that the Clerk should record the number of additional hours worked and charge the Council accordingly.

10 November Letter from Kent Highway Services enclosing a Highways & Transport Tracker survey to tell them what we think about Highway Services. **Cllr Friend to complete.**

Councillors were asked if there was any further correspondence they wished to discuss. There was none.

17. **Items for future discussion**

- Model Publication Scheme
- Risk Assessment

18. **Date of next meeting :** Parish Council meeting, 10 January 2012 at 7.30 pm
Village Hall.

All Welcome