

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 10 December 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair) Cllr C Friend
Cllr D Boulding Cllr P Harris
Cllr E Cansdale Cllr A Lidgett
Cllr F Chalk Cllr J Tydeman

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

6 Parishioners attended

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and stated that he had a sad announcement to make: Eric Farris had died earlier in the day. Eric was born in Field Cottage and had lived in the village all his life, apart from being in the armed forces. Eric Farris had been the Parish Clerk, a councillor and chairman of the parish council, and following his retirement as a councillor maintained a position on the Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow group. He was responsible for the memorial trees. He was much loved and respected, and had an integral role in this council. The chairman had spoken to Eric's wife earlier in the afternoon and she had expressed her wish that people should know about his death and details of funeral arrangements will be given in due course.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Ruse (this matter will be discussed further under Staffing)
Borough Councillor Neil Bell

2. Parishioners' questions

There were no questions

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

There were none.

4. Any changes to the Register of Members Interest

There were none.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 6 November 2013

There were no comments or amendments to the minutes previously circulated to councillors and the minutes were therefore declared a true and proper record of the meeting.
Proposed by: Cllr F Chalk Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding. **Unanimous.**

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

There is a staffing item and it is normal to take staffing items in closed session. A proposal will be put forward later asking councillors if they wish to take agenda item 19 in closed

session.

7. Co-option

Dr Edward Stevenson-Rouse had put himself forward for co-option to the council. The co-option procedure was explained and councillors were asked if they would like to vote by ballot or show of hands. A show of hands was agreed.

Dr Stevenson-Rouse stated that he was a retired dental surgeon and had lived in Biddenden since 1980. He was also a JP on the North Kent circuit. He had varied interests and was interested in what happened locally and now has more time at his disposal.

Councillors were asked if they had any questions and Dr Stevenson-Rouse was asked if he had any questions. It was stated that a co-opted councillor was not a publicly elected councillor, but one elected by the parish council. However, a co-opted councillor would stay in place until the next elections in May 2015 when they were welcome to stand for election.

Councillors were asked if they wished to elect Dr Stevenson-Rouse to the council and a show of hands was requested for and against. Dr Stevenson-Rouse was elected unanimously. He would take his place as a councillor at the January meeting.

The Clerk stated that a notice had gone into the Parish Magazine for the January issue for the vacancy left by Cllr Hunt's resignation. Applications are invited, and the deadline is Saturday 1 February 2014.

8. Sue Maidens re talk on Young Kent

Unfortunately Sue Maidens is unable to attend due to illness but it is hoped that she will be able to attend the January meeting.

9. Report by Cllr Bell

The Clerk had circulated a report sent by Cllr Bell and it was read out to the meeting:

"Local Plan

I note that the parish council is considering the sites put forward for the local plan. I also note that the parish council have previously stated that it intends to engage with the local plan process.

I hope it is useful for the parish council to know that it is the intention of the Conservative administration at Ashford Borough council for parishes such as Biddenden to "get what it wants" with regards to the forthcoming local plan.

So I would strongly recommend that rather than entering the local plan process "with an open mind", the parish council very clearly takes a view on the sites and what it wants rather than being shaped by the process. If the parish council is at all uncertain, there is every chance that ABC officers will put in place plans for Biddenden which are unrelated to the wishes of it's residents.

In terms of housing numbers, I would also add highlight that the total of

- *the number of households planned for the existing Cheeslands development*
- *the number of households hoped to come from the local needs work currently taking place*
- *the number of "windfall" households which have arrived on an "ad hoc" basis is pretty much in line with the number suggested in the parish plan over the life of the forthcoming local plan (which is likely to be in place for five years before being renewed)*

I would also urge the parish council to consider very carefully the wishes of the Townland Close residents before supporting development at that location - this site has been put forward many times and has always been strongly opposed by residents.

Other than that, please pass on my best wishes to one and all and thank everyone including yourself for all your hard work during the year."

After discussion it was agreed that the Council would continue with its plans to run open meetings under the guidance of the ABC planning Officers to review the proposals for the parish.

10. Southside Pavement – Phase 2

A telephone call had been received from KCC Members Grants to check contact details. The member of staff said that they were going to send an invoice for £15,000 re the BPC project. The only project in which the council is actively involved in requesting funding from KCC is the Southside Pavement – Phase 2. The Clerk was informed that the invoice would be sent but no papers have been received to-date. This matter was discussed by the Finance Committee on 2 December as part of the Budget discussions. A revised expected figure of £12,500 has been put in the expected by 31/3/14 column and the Mill Court contribution of £2,500 remains the same but also in the expected 31/3/14 column. This would total the £15,000 required. However, the Finance Committee recommends that if on receipt the invoice is for £15,000 Cllr Hill is contacted to see if this figure is negotiable as the original figure agreed by the council and notified was £10,500. An email has been sent to Cllr Hill to this effect.

11. Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2013 - Site submissions for Biddenden

A letter had been written to ABC following the last meeting stating that the parish council would like to be part of the consultation process and asking what the timescale for procedures was and what the key strategies are. A reply is awaited but the clerk had chased up the reply. A revised map of a site had been received and this would be put on the notice board.

12. Local Needs Housing

A reply has now been received from the owners of the preferred site who are in contact with the Charity Commission.

13. Implementation: Community Led Plan

Business Association: A date is currently being organised. An email has been received from

a business expressing interest following publication of the December Parish Magazine.

Children, Youth and Leisure: See item 8.

Seating: Ashford Access has been contacted and a reply is awaited.

Doctors Surgery: The Headcorn Practice has written that they “have no plans to re-offer our gift of a branch surgery to the village”.

The first step is to review the medical provision in the village. An approach then needs to be made to East Kent NHS to see if they will provide a surgery. However, it does not have the public interface of the former PCT. Cllr Hill will be approached and perhaps the MP to seek advice on how to move this forward. The Chairman and Vice Chairman will follow this up.

The meeting closed

Dr Stevenson Rouse volunteered to investigate how the council might engage with the NHS.

The meeting reopened.

Reports on findings will be made at the next meeting.

14. Reports by Clerk, Group Chairmen and Parish Council Representatives

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: Someone is using the disabled toilet as a smoking room and has once again stuffed toilet paper into the smoke alarm. A contractor has been asked to unblock it and also to paint out the graffiti on the back of the men’s cubicle door.

A revised quotation is being obtained for the painting of the exterior of the toilets.

The quotation for the repair of the overhead barrier is awaited although the contractor has now been to look.

The car park hedge has been cut back.

Cllr Bell has chased the toilet grant with ABC and a response is awaited.

The specification for work to the fence along the northside of the car park is being prepared.

A new toilet tissue dispenser has been delivered for the disabled toilet and has been fitted.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: A reply is awaited from KHS re whose responsibility the maintenance of the Sissinghurst Rd culvert is.

A meeting was held on 29th November between the PCSO, Chairman, a parishioner and two young people representing those who frequent the post office and the Millennium Field car parks. The notes of the meeting had been circulated. No further action is required at the present time until the council is in a position to have an open meeting to talk about youth activities which the two young people indicated that they would be willing to attend.

The gate into the Jubilee Meadow on the school footpath has been damaged and repairs have been completed.

The storm damaged trees have been cut down.

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: The deep hole outside 39 Glebelands has been reported and is still awaiting attention.

The two further replacement litter bins have been put in place: one in the churchyard and one outside the rectory.

The painting of the village sign has been completed and has been refitted. The pole will be painted shortly. The plaque for the pole has been completed and collected and will be put in place once the restoration is complete.

Turf for the village green has been laid.

A quote has been received for the repair of the loose Bethersden marble stones by the church lych-gate and as it is under £500 the clerk will organise it. Once this is done a meeting will be organised with affected parties.

A quote has been received for the straightening and repair of the overhead height restriction barrier, and as it is under £500 the clerk will organise the repair.

The jubilee stone has been put back in place thanks to the efforts of Hugh Richards, for which the council is appreciative.

Gordon Jones Playing Field and Play Area: The specification for work on the playground following the inspection has been completed and sent off.

A proposal for a new playground (£75,000) has been received. A figure of £35,000 has been included in the 2014/15 budget under Special Projects. This assumes that any shortfall will be provided by grants. Other quotations will be sought.

The Clerk reported that the new contract for mowing of the Gordon Jones Playing Fields and grass verges had been received. The possibility of going out to tender had been discussed at a previous meeting and the Clerk asked the council if this was what it wished to happen. It was agreed that tenders should be sought.

Police Liaison: The meeting notes from the meeting between the Council, residents, PCSO and two young people held on 29th November had been circulated and discussed under the Millennium and Jubilee Meadow above.

The crime list from PCSO Burden for the period October to December was discussed and it was agreed that Cllr Lidgett should request further data from the PCSO for comparative purposes. The Clerk was asked to contact Anne Barnes office to find out about costs and possibility of getting a dedicated PCSO. Cllr Lidgett undertook to speak to the area coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch and invite them to speak at a council meeting.

Planning and Local Housing: Nothing to report.

KALC: Nothing to report

Parish Forum: The next meeting of the Parish Forum will be held on 11 December 2013.

Recycling: Nothing to report. Letters of thanks have been received from recipients of the donations. A notice will be put into the parish magazine for the next round of applications, closing date **Friday 7th February**.

Health and Safety: The fallen trees have been removed from Gordon Jones Playing Field. Nothing further to report.

Allotments: Nothing to report

John Mayne School: The Christmas Bazaar raised £1000. Admission numbers are down slightly and BPC have been asked if they could help promote the school. The school is expecting an Ofsted inspection sometime in the coming year.

Speedwatch: The agreement with Cranbrook & Sissinghurst PC has been signed and returned together with BPC's £460 contribution. Insurance is in place for the SID and 5 hi-vis waistcoats have now been received. KCC agreed that the surplus funds from the Community Led Plan could be used towards the setting up of a Speedwatch group.

The Chair of the Biddenden Community Speedwatch Group has had to stand down due to illness. Cllr Lidgett was elected Chairman of the group by members of the management committee of the Speedwatch Group.

15. Finance

a) Approval of cheques for payment: The list had been circulated to councillors. The Chairman asked for any comments or amendments. There being none the list was proposed for payment. Proposed by: Cllr P Harris Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Unanimous**

b) Accounts to 1 December 2013: The monthly accounts had been circulated and were noted.

c) Bank Accounts: As stated in a recent email to councillors, at the Finance Committee meeting held on Monday 2 December, it was reported that an application for an account had been made to secure the 1.3% interest rate on the Nationwide business savings bond. The Chair stated that an account could not be set up without a resolution and would therefore be brought back to the next meeting.

The Clerk was categorically told when clarifying the rate and application for the account that their £20,000 limit (Isle of Man as previously advised in discussions) did apply to PCs. The council's own bank has confirmed that the £85k limit did apply on several occasions. However, this does not appear to be the case and KALC/NALC and SLCC have confirmed this.

d) **Budget 2014/15:** The draft minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 2 December 2013 were noted.

A copy of the draft budget for 2014/5 and forecast for the following three years had been circulated. Consideration was given to the precept and it was agreed that it remain at a total figure of £47,500 made up of £44,360 precept and £3,140 Council Tax Support grant.

It was noted that the deficit for 2014/15 was primarily due to the provision for a new play area. The budget presented indicates that there is a cash deficit of £31234 for the year. The impact reduces the cash position to £45000 at the year end. A minor error in the opening cash position for 2014/5 was noted.

Discussion took place regarding the possibility of commemorating World War I and it was agreed to address this at a future meeting.

It was proposed to adopt the 2014/5 budget as presented. The Chairman and Chairman of the Finance Committee will check that the minor arithmetic error is corrected prior to publication. The working columns will also be removed. Proposed by: Cllr A Lidgett
Seconded by: Cllr C Friend. **Unanimous.**

16. Planning

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
13/01294 /AS	Biddenden	Rose Garden Paddock, Hareplain Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LJ Erection of shed	Comment that the plan does not show where the shed will be
13/01282 /AS	Biddenden	Khios, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BL Detached Garage	Support
13/01105 /AS	Biddenden	Frogshole Barn, Sissinghurst Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EY Changes to fenestration and rainwater goods; additional elements of structure; thermal improvements to elements of existing fabric; including alterations and additional works to approval 13/00507/AS.	Support

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
13/01348/AS	Biddenden	Dullens Farmhouse, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BF Proposed removal of 1no internal partition, reinstatement of fire place, internal repairs and installation of satellite dish to house. Regularization of unauthorized internal works to associated outbuilding	Support
13/01335/AS	Biddenden	Kingsmead Oast, Cranbrook Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8ER Remove conditions 8, 9 and 10 of planning permission 02/01504/AS (conversion of an oast house to one holiday let)	Object as planning conditions had not been followed

TREE APPLICATIONS

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
13/00223/TP	Biddenden	The Barn, 3B Old Mill Court, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DD T2 - Field Maple (nine stemmed) - cut trunk to hedge level; reduce all stems by 30%	Support

17. Correspondence: Please see the list circulated.

3/11 Email from parishioner re sponsored dog walk (attached). Councillors were asked to consider if they wish to allow a walk to take place on the Millennium Field. **Yes but advice must be sought from Guide Dogs for the Blind regarding health and safety and insurance for the event.**

26/11 Email from Tenterden Tigers re permission to use GJ playing field on 7 and 8 June. Does Council give permission for use? **Yes providing Biddenden Jnrs do not require the field. Biddenden Jnrs to be given a deadline for them to reply by and if no reply received agree Tigers can use the field.**

28/11 Letter from KCC re diversion of footpath. Councillors were asked to consider the change and answer the questions on the back page of the letter. (Letter with council papers. Circulated to TPF working group). **Peter Whitestone has looked at the plan and it was agreed that it does not cause a problem.**

3/11 Biddenden Consolidated Charity: Reappointment of Trustees. Councillors are asked to confirm the nominees' appointments. **Agreed**

18. Items for future consideration: To be put forward at meeting

Risk Assessment
Business Continuity Plan
Model Publication Scheme
Commemoration of World War I

19. Staffing

It was agreed to take this item in closed Session.

The Clerk left the meeting.

An email to the Clerk was discussed. It was noted that following advice from SLCC it had been requested that the issues raised be treated as staffing matter. The author of the email had been informed of this request, and that advice would be sought on how to handle the email from the ABC Monitoring Officer and KALC. The Chairman read out the advice received, which was that the matter should be handled following the Councils Standing Orders, Policies and Procedures.

It was agreed that:

- The Council would treat the matter in accordance with its Complaints Policy and Procedure.
- The Chairman would send letters to both parties informing them of this decision.
- Cllrs Chalk and Friend would be appointed as additional members of the Internal Review Committee.
- Advice would be sought from KALC in preparing the minute, and letters above.

Motion proposed by Cllr Boulding and Seconded by Cllr Lidgett. Passed Unanimously.

The Meeting was reopened.

The Clerk re-joined the meeting

20. Date and time of next meeting: Parish Council meeting, Tuesday 14 January 2014

The meeting closed at 10.20 pm

Alison Swannick Tel: 07783223450
Parish Clerk