

**UNAPPROVED Minutes of Annual Parish Meeting held on
Tuesday 23 April 2013 at 7.00 pm**

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

County Councillor Michael Hill
Borough Councillor Neil Bell
Mrs Melanie Williams – Head Teacher, John Mayne CE Primary School
Ms Stephanie Boucher – Chair of Community Led Plan

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

16 parishioners attended

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and introductions were made.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr N Hunt due to business commitments

2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 24 April 2012

The Chairman stated that the unapproved minutes had been noted by the Parish Council. The meeting was asked if there were any factual comments or any changes that parishioners wished to make. There being no alterations the minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr H Ruse Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett.
Unanimous.

3. Chairman's Report

Please see the attached.

4. KCC report by Cllr Michael Hill

Cllr Hill is Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities and has had the same portfolio for the past eight years.

It has been a rollercoaster year. The Duke of Kent opened the new archive centre in Maidstone, which provides a tremendous home for the archives and some fine pieces are housed there.

A wonderful couple of weeks was seen with the Olympics. KCC has tried to excite and inspire young people, and since the Olympics, the level of sport increased in schools from the year before and the concept of the Olympic legacy was bought into and is going forward.

The number of visitors to the Turner Contemporary in Margate has kept up with 800,000

visitors to the centre. Margate is showing signs of recovery, with 35 new businesses starting up in the Old Town. In October 2013 there will be an exhibition of Turner, Constable and Gainsborough at the Turner Contemporary.

An application has been made for East Kent to be a European City of Culture. Whilst it is not a city, such an application is possible.

Money is a big problem, especially in Cllr Hill's portfolio where Youth and Libraries have been hit hard, not to mention having to make better use of assets. For example, it is proposed that births and deaths can be registered in libraries rather than with a Registrar.

Rural unemployment has increased. An apprentice programme is in place to encourage the education sector to motivate pupils and also to motivate employers into taking on apprentices. Hopefully this will help.

Work to fill in potholes which have appeared due to the appalling weather over the winter is taking place.

The decision was taken not to increase the Council Tax this year.

The Police Commissioner for Kent, Mrs Anne Barnes, was elected last November. It is co-incidental that there has been an increase in violent crime and burglary, especially the theft of diesel fuel and oil.

The Tenterden Forum has been very productive especially in terms of sharing ideas.

Cllr Hill is delighted that Phase 1 of the Southside Pavement has been completed. The issue had been on-going for many years. .

Cllr Hill has served 12 years as a councillor and intends to stand again, subject to the elections.

Questions were invited for Cllr Hill as he had another meeting to attend. A question was asked about Phase 2 of the Southside pavement. Cllr Hill reiterated his support. There being no further questions, the Chairman thanked Cllr Hill.

5. Ashford Borough Council report by Cllr Neil Bell

The rubbish collection service in the borough has hitherto been very popular. A new contract has been awarded and the system is about to change. Most people will have received details with their Council Tax bill. The timetable for changes is as follows:

End of May	Parishioners will receive a letter detailing collection dates and details of what can be recycled.
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June	Bins and sacks will be delivered to houses
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8-19 July	The first recycling collections will take place
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Parishioners will either be receiving two wheelie bins and a food caddy and bin. The food bin will be collected every week with the recycling and general waste bins each collected on

alternate weeks. Some houses may still need to use sacks if they cannot house wheelie bins eg terraced housing. Please contact either ABC or Cllr Bell if you need help.

ABC is currently at the bottom of the recycling tables for the whole country, but with this new system hopes to be in the top 25%.

Cllr Bell was very pleased with the progress of the Housing Needs Survey as social housing is definitely needed in Biddenden.

With regards to planning applications, the closing of shops on the High Street will always take a great deal of time and ABC takes this issue very seriously.

6. Presentation by Mrs Melanie Williams, Head Teacher of John Mayne School

Mrs Williams has been the Headteacher for six years. She introduced David Horn as the new Chair of Governors. He had taken over from Ian Rickwood and Mrs Williams thanked Mr Rickwood.

Mr Horn has worked as Headteacher in independent schools and now works as an inspector of independent schools. He is also a magistrate and has lived in the village for approximately 6 years.

There are 120 pupils in the school at the moment aged 4 – 11 years arranged in five classes. There are some split classes as the village does not have enough pupils for one form entry.

Approximately 20 people work for the school. There are 5 full-time teachers and various part-time staff.

The school will be celebrating its 500th anniversary in 2022.

There is a breakfast club which starts at 0800 and an after school club which runs until 1800.

There is an extensive range of extracurricular clubs. Children attend festivals throughout the year and activities include football, swimming, dance, cricket basketball.

The standard of education has been systematically increasing. Typically, children are leaving school having reached SATS level 4 with an increasing number achieving levels 5 and 6. The quality of teaching levels throughout the school means that the school is currently in a very good position.

A balanced curriculum is provided with trips being organised. There is a residential trip each year and the whole school does a long walk around the countryside.

The school interacts with the community, eg it has been doing a sewing project with the Jollies.

In terms of what the school will be able to do in the future, there are lots of ideas but it is limited and has a capital budget of £5,000. A new website is being developed and the school is hoping to improve the library. Due to some additional money from the government becoming available, the school is looking to improve sport provision in the school. There is

an extensive list of sports fixtures with other schools whereby children can compete on a weekly basis.

The school does need community support even if it is not in a practical sense – people need to be proud of the school.

Questions:

- a) Perhaps a meeting could take place with Biddenden Juniors Football Club as a number of its members are pupils at the school. **Agreed**
- b) Is there a problem with some children attending school in Tenterden, St Michaels, Sissinghurst rather than John Mayne? **Some people do, but there is a problem with housing and for some families with three children offers of improved accommodation can be out of the village. The school has lost two families in this way.**
- c) Is it correct that the amount of money the school gets is determined by the number of children in the school? What difference is made if 5 children joined the school? **Possibly an extra full-time classroom assistant. The amount the school receives per child is approximately £2000 per child. People are always welcome to come and look around. We are very proud of the school.**
- d) How many more children could the school take? **An additional 20. The school could take 140.**

The Chairman thanked Mrs Williams. He thanked Mr Rickward for his services and welcomed David Horn as the new Chair of Governors.

(A hand-out from the meeting relating to the school is available on the parish council website at www.biddenden.gov.uk).

7. Presentation by Ms Stephanie Boucher, Chair, Community Led Plan

The Community Led Plan is now reaching its conclusion and should be complete by the end of June or shortly thereafter.

It started off with a qualitative survey followed by a quantitative survey to quantify results. A public meeting is to be held on 18th June to present the results. They show that people valued the historic centre, jobs and sense of community. Other issues raised were road safety and provision of a doctors surgery. These results were used to decide questions for the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was distributed to 1080 households and 700 were returned and analysis of the data is now starting.

Communication about the Community Led Plan has been through Parish Council meetings, posters, Parish Magazine, Parish meetings. There was a steering group consisting of 7-8 people. There is also a vast list of volunteers who have agreed to help with one off asks such as inputting the questionnaire results into Survey Monkey.

There has been a lot of goodwill.

Preliminary results show that the following issues are of concern:

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| a) | Speeding and traffic flow through the village | 84% |
| b) | Road condition | 66% |
| c) | Would like a doctors surgery | 57% |
| d) | More than 80% feel safe in Biddenden | |
| e) | More than 66% favour more housing in the village | |
| f) | Those for and against more commercial development were exactly equal. | |

The recommended length of time to produce a Community Led Plan is 12 – 18 months. Biddenden launched the Community Led Plan in October 2011.

A grant of £3000 was received from Kent County Council and there is currently £1466 remaining. There is an additional £1000 available from the Parish Council if required. A monthly subscription has been paid to Survey Monkey for analysis of the results of the questionnaire.

Questions:

- a) It is an impression that some people may have collaborated on responses rather than each completing a survey. ***Some people have completed paper questionnaires, approximately 200 people responded online which is less than expected. 500 people had responded on paper and these have then had to be input online.***

The Chairman thanked Ms Boucher for her presentation and work on the plan.

A copy of the presentation can be found at www.biddenden.gov.uk

8. Parishioners' Questions and discussion

- a) There were problems with mowing and drainage on the Gordon Jones Playing Field. Could a meeting be arranged to discuss this? ***Agreed***
- b) Does the Parish Council pay for street lighting as the lights are on from midnight to 0600? ***No, but an email will be sent to Cllr Bell regarding this issue.***
- c) Earlier Cllr Bell mentioned flats. The village had a lot of flats a while ago – did ABC sell them? ***That would only apply to council housing. Social housing cannot be bought unlike council property. For social housing a suitable site would need to be found, ie an exception site, which would not be at market value as it would not get planning permission for development otherwise.***

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- d) The council has a Habitual or Vexatious Complaint Policy. Could it have been used for the objection to the Council's accounts two years ago? ***The policy is to protect the Council's staff. The policy is very specific. When dealing with issues such as the objection to the Council's accounts the Council takes advice.***
- e) A question was asked regarding the state of the former Parsons estate agents. ***It is private property belonging to a private individual so nothing can be done.***
- f) A parishioner thanked the Parish Council for replacing the bin by the Millennium Field.

The Chairman thanked everybody for their contributions. The meeting closed at 2045.

Refreshments were provided.

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk