

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 OCTOBER 2014 AT 7.30 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL, BIDDENDEN

Present: Cllr C Friend (Chair) Cllr A Lidgett
Cllr D Boulding Cllr T Lupton
Cllr E Cansdale Cllr S Parks
Cllr P Harris Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse
Cllr J Tydeman

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

2 parishioners attended

1. Apologies for absence

Borough Cllr Neil Bell sent apologies.

2. Parishioners' questions

A parishioner thanked the council for putting a notice regarding fly-tipping in the parish magazine.

The Environment Agency has been looking at the flooding issue behind Mansion House Close.

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

None.

4. Any changes to the Register of Members Interest

None.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 9 September 2014

There being no comments or amendments, the minutes of the parish council meeting held on 9 September 2014 were proposed as being a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr J Tydeman Seconded by: Cllr S Parks. **Agreed** by those who attended that meeting.

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

People have been asking when the paper recycling is coming back. It was stated that it wouldn't be and that the ABC recycling (paper and glass) would be gone by 23 October from the Gordon Jones playing field car park.

7. Report by Cllr Bell, ABC

Cllr Bell submitted a report to be read out in his absence:

“Recycling

The recycling firm SITA recently launched an interactive map showing the recycling rates of areas in England - unfortunately the rates for Ashford are NOT up-to-date. (SITA used to collect our waste, BIFFA does so now.)

So for the record the position is:

In the last full year before the new recycling scheme, the rate was about 14%. (Not good - we were bottom of the league!)

The official rate for the year just gone is about to be published by Westminster and will show a rate of about 40%, but be aware that the new recycling service only ran for part of this year.

The best information is that we are currently recycling at a whole year rate approaching 60% which would put the borough in the top 10% of the league table of recycling authorities in the country!!

I have to thank and congratulate all residents for making this happen!!

Local Plan

The planners have completed a technical evaluation of the submitted site and only two sites have been deemed technically feasible. This does NOT rule these two sites IN to the next Local Plan - but it does rule the others OUT.

Based on my previous experience of this process, my suspicion is that the planners may be hoping that by pushing two sites through this stage, one at least will make it into the local plan - but clearly this is my perception and not at all how the process is officially defined.

However, my position is clear, bearing in mind the general needs site underway at Sandeman Way, the strong possibility of two local needs social housing developments and the handful of "ad hoc" and infill houses which have recently taken place, I do not believe there is a need to identify ANY additional site in this iteration of the Local Plan. I believe Biddenden is already growing organically at a decent rate.

I would also add, that I do recognise the national shortage of houses, but the 5,000 houses planned for Chilmington Green (which are just up the road and will reach almost to Bethersden) show very well how the borough is playing its part in addressing this shortage.

Council Tax

The position continues to be that the Ashford Borough Council portion of the council tax

(roughly 10% of the council tax) is the lowest average charge of any borough in Kent and we are currently freezing the tax, four years in the current five year period.

A freeze is a cut in real terms, after one takes inflation into account.

I do know that money is tight for many and I'm very happy that Ashford Borough Council has kept its tax rate low."

8. Co-option

This item was deferred until later in the meeting as the candidate had not yet arrived.

9. Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2030 - Site submissions for Biddenden

Nothing further has been heard. The Council was disappointed to learn of the possible two sites in Biddenden from Cllr Bell rather than ABC. The Clerk was asked to request the names of the two sites from ABC.

10. Review and Implementation: Community Led Plan

Nothing has yet been heard from Cllr Hill, but a meeting will be organised before the November meeting.

11. New Play Area

A draft questionnaire has been prepared for distribution to, and completion by, parents from the school, play group and nursery. Other copies will be made available in the Post Office. A working group meeting is to be held to agree the way forward.

12. Post Office

The Chairman suggested that this item should be discussed at the end of the meeting and in closed session. A show of hands took place. **Agreed.**

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

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The toilet grant for 2014/15 in the sum of £3,000 has been agreed and will be remitted shortly. The grant will be reviewed annually by ABC. Rubbish had been reported in the car park. This turned out to be waste from takeaways and was cleared up

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: Following the last meeting, the Clerk contacted RPA to discuss the cross compliance report and also to seek advice as to whether the council can claim. Despite two telephone calls and promises of a return telephone call, a letter was received dated 24 September. It referred to question 5 of the Inspection report (circulated)

The Clerk contacted BTF Partnership, a firm of land and property specialists. A record of the Clerk's conversation had been circulated.

After further discussion regarding SPS, it was **agreed** not to make a claim this year and to accept that the Council could not claim going forwards. Proposed by: Cllr J Tydeman
Seconded by: Cllr P Harris. **Unanimous.**

Tree Survey

Three quotations to carry out a health and safety survey on trees in the Millennium Field and Gordon Jones Playing Field. After discussion, it was **agreed** to accept the quotation from G. Bridgland. Proposed by: Cllr J Tydeman Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Unanimous.**

Millennium Field Car Park

Two quotations to fill in the potholes in the Millennium Field Car Park had been received, and it was **agreed** to accept the quotation from Bourne Amenity. Proposed by: Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse Seconded by: Cllr S Parks. **Unanimous.**

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: A report has been made to Kent Highways regarding an overgrown verge at Woolpack corner as it was making it difficult to see traffic turning into Benenden Road from the Tenterden Rd. No reply has yet been received

Hedges

A parishioner has reported that the hedge opposite Cot Lane needs cutting and is also overhanging the path. The hedge is making it difficult to see as you turn into Cot Lane. A reply was received from KCC stating that KCC Highways are responsible for making sure the highway is free of any obstruction in the area. They are not aware of any KCC owned hedges in this area so they would be privately owned. It was **agreed** that the owner should be contacted in the first instance.

Several parishioners have written to complain about the High Halden/Tenterden Rd junction and the speed limit just outside the village. All correspondence was sent to Cllr Hill. However, despite his best efforts, the Traffic Engineer has stated that there have not been a pattern of speed related incidents at this point and so funds cannot be committed. The police have also objected to a 50 mph limit.

The Clerk was asked to write to Damian Green MP.

Gordon Jones Playing field and Play Area: Some of the work on the play area has been completed and the contractor is being chased regarding the remainder but nothing has yet been heard.

Some emergency repairs have been sanctioned in the play area: the head of one of the toddler rockers has been broken off and the seat on the seesaw is an H&S risk. A fence post in the old children's play area is also at an angle which is pushing the fence out.

A quote for the squash club embankment has been received but a revised one has been requested as it did not cover all requirements.

Police Liaison: The police crime statistics for August 2014 show 14 reported crimes in Biddenden:

Criminal damage and arson	2
Other theft	5
Burglary	1
Drugs	1
Anti-social behaviour	2
Violence and sexual offences	3

An email was received from the Ashford District Commander (circulated)

Planning and Local Housing: There is nothing further to report on the Local Needs Housing.

A parishioner has been in touch regarding alleged possible development on/near the designated traveller land at Little Acres. Land has been levelled and a road/track made finishing just behind the hedge going onto Benenden Road. The planning officer has been contacted and has looked into the matter. She has confirmed that no development is taking place.

KALC: Nothing to report

Parish Forum: Nothing to report.

Recycling: A Recycling Working Group meeting will be held the week commencing 20th October to discuss applications.

The ABC bottle banks will be removed on 23rd October. Any bottles or glass can now be put in the residents' recycling bins

At the last meeting the Clerk was asked to write to ABC asking about the 2014/15 recycling credits. This has been done (attached) but no reply received. The email has been resent and a reply will be chased up.

Village Hall Management Committee: Next meeting is 11 December 2014.

Health and Safety: A bench is broken on the Millennium Field. See play area report – the seesaw seat and toddler rocker are to be repaired.

Allotments: Two allotments have become available. There are people on the waiting list and the arrangements have been discussed with BAA who is happy. It was **agreed** that the Clerk to reallocate the two plots and that refunds to the end of September should be given to those giving up the allotments and a pro-rata amount charged to the new allotment holders to the beginning of April 2015.

John Mayne School: Christmas Bazaar – 5th December 2014.

14. Finance

a) Approval of cheques for payment. The Schedule was **agreed**. Proposed by: Cllr S Parks
Seconded by: Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse. **Unanimous**

b) Accounts to 30 September - noted.

c) Budget preparation - councillors to provide figures for/details of any projects they wish to be included in the budget

d) Annual Return - The Annual return is back and on the website for parishioners to view. The Clerk explained the comments made within the return..

e) Nationwide Business Savings Bond. The six month term is now ended. It was **agreed** to put the £20,000 plus interest into a new 1 year Nationwide business savings account as the previous one is no longer available. **Agreed.**

15. Planning

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
14/01124/AS	Biddenden	Braceby, 62a North Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AS Erection of a first floor side extension over garage and single storey rear extension	Support
14/01182/AS	Biddenden	Park Farm House, Frittenden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LQ Erection of two storey and single storey extensions to rear elevation, single storey extension to front elevation to replace porch, change to pitched roof over existing porch, changes to fenestration and external finishes (revised scheme to that approved under 12/00644/AS)	Support
14/01202/AS	Biddenden	Land between 11 and 12, Chulkhurst, Biddenden, Kent Change of use of land to garden/allotment	Support subject to land not being used for development

16. Correspondence

ACTION

18/9 Email from a parishioner about a skateboard park. *Clerk to write to ABC regarding the letter.*

28/9 Request for a memorial tree. *To be referred to the Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow working group*

2/10 Elections 2015 – *details to be put on notice boards*

3/10 KCC Parish Forum – 18/10/15 – *No-one to attend*

6/10 Squash Club 40th Anniversary celebration – *Clerk asked to agree providing correct insurance, entertainment and alcohol licences are in place.*

17. Items for future consideration

Budget – to be considered at the December meeting.

18. Date and Time of Next Meeting: Tuesday 11th November at 7.30 pm, Village Hall

The meeting was closed to the public to discuss item 12 as detailed above under agenda item 12.

12. Post Office

A Post Office Working Group meeting had been held on 2nd October 2014. The minutes had been previously circulated together with a copy of the District Valuer's report.

A summary was given of the meeting and its recommendations:

- a) That consideration should be given to accepting the proposal by the interested party
- b) To try and negotiate on the rental
- c) To fix the rent for 2 years but at the end of this time it would increase according to the RPI. If the RPI should go down the rental will remain static and will not decrease with it.
- d) To try and negotiate the length of lease for 7 years in order to save on costs. The Clerk was asked to seek advice on this.
- e) Consideration of opening times commencing at 09.00 in lieu of 10.00 and Saturdays.

Councillors discussed the District Valuer's report and its recommended market rental versus the rental offered and whether it was appropriate to deploy the General Disposal Consent Order (2003). They considered whether there was social, economic and community benefit to recommend a rental below the market rate.

It was **RESOLVED** that a joint meeting of the Post Office Working Group and Finance Committee should meet with the prospective tenant and discuss the length of lease and the annual rental to see if the offer could be increased. Following this meeting the recommendations from the meeting would be put to the full parish council for consideration. An extraordinary meeting could be held. Proposed by: Cllr A Lidgett Seconded by: Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse.

Unanimous.

The meeting closed at 22:05.

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk

077832 23450