

BIDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED Minutes of the meeting of Biddenden Parish Council held on Tuesday 13 September 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden

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

Mrs A Swannick – Clerk

8 Parishioners attended

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Cllr T Bizley due to personal commitments
Cllr N Bell, Borough Councillor

2. Parishioners' questions

a) Questions were asked regarding the new play area and observations on equipment, matting that needed repair/looking at and hedge cutting. *The contractor is coming down to do some snagging and most items mentioned are already on the list. Additional items will be looked at. It was stated that a contractor had been instructed to cut the hedge.*

b) The surface where the basketball net is sited is unsatisfactory. *The parish council will be looking at possibly getting the area tarmacked.*

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

None.

4. Any changes to Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 12 July 2016

There being no comments or amendments the minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr S Parks Seconded by: Cllr P Harris.
Unanimous.

6. Minutes of the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 18 August 2016

There being no comments or amendments, the minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Agreed** by those who attended.

7. Matters for information not on the agenda

None.

8. Report by Cllr Bell, ABC

No report as apologies were given.

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

The letter from BPC to ABC in response to policies S27 and S43 has been sent. An acknowledgement has been received but nothing further. The Clerk was asked to provide a word version of the Design Statement rather than the PDF supplied. This was done and sent.

A report of the work of the S27 and S43 Working Group will be given under agenda item 14.

10. Health and Safety Policy

It was agreed to adopt the policy as it stands and make any amendments required at the Statutory Annual Meeting.

11. Press/Media Policy

It was agreed to adopt the policy as it stands and make any amendments required at the Statutory Annual Meeting.

12. Neighbourhood Plan

Councillors agreed that it was worth exploring whether a Neighbourhood Plan would be appropriate for Biddenden. The Clerk was asked to get copies of other parishes Neighbourhood Plans for councillors to look at.

13. Phone Box adoption

Four people have pledged support for the box and running it. An email was sent to BT asking questions raised at the last meeting and these are attached along with an email from one of the parishioners regarding the ongoing maintenance etc. There are no planning issues unless it is planned to extend it. **It was agreed** to adopt the phone box and that the Clerk could enter into the adoption process on behalf of the parish council. Proposed by: Cllr S Parks Seconded by Cllr J Tydeman. **Unanimous**

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

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The CCTV unit has been serviced. Quotations has been requested for additional CCTV units on the inside of the PO and these were considered. However, **it was agreed** not to take the issue further as it was up to the post office to safeguard its business.

The fire alarm in the Post Office became faulty and an engineer had to be called out. This has been fixed and a service is booked.

The locksmith was called out as the Disabled Toilet door lock is broken. Two new soap dispensers have been ordered.

The Headcorn Postmaster is, contrary to previous information, still interested in the PO. However, the Post Office PLC has not made up its mind on Biddenden. He is interested in the outreach option with additional hours agreed, but until a decision has been made by PO plc nothing can be done.

It had been suggested that the Parish Council might do something to help with the Post Office rent due to the current situation. **It was agreed** that a formal application would need to be made to the parish council by the postmistress and that the parish council would need to look at accounts in order to consider such an application before any decision could be made.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: The issue of cars were going into the Millennium Field car park at around 1 am and causing a disturbance has continued. A parishioner had already informed the PCSO. It was agreed at the last meeting to ask VHMC if the squash club CCTV unit recorded number plates of cars entering. This has been done but it transpires that the infrared is not working. It has been suggested that an application be made to the Community Project Fund to help upgrade the CCTV equipment. The police have been informed.

The grass around the memorial trees has been strimmed.

A contractor has been asked to quote for cutting all the hedges in the MF and JM. A quotation is awaited.

The dipping platforms have been removed.

The Countryside Stewardship Agreement with Natural England ends in December. Having looked into applying for the Mid-Tier agreement it looks as if BPC would find it difficult to qualify without letting the land out as a Farm Business Tenancy for a period of perhaps 10 years and the tenant would then apply. There would be a cost in setting this up, and this is likely to be of the order of £1,000. This had been discussed before and concluded it would give the PC less flexibility on management, so not a route to follow. The Chair of the Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadows Working Group had been consulted. **It was agreed** not to apply for the Mid-Tier agreement.

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: A contractor had been asked to quote to even up the stones beneath the Lych-gate and to redo the white lines in the PO car park. You will note that there are two options for the work by the lych-gate. The Chairman stated that he would be talking to the church about this.

Mini Sid: Cllr Lidgett had been asked to see if a unit could be solar powered and he reported back that a solar powered mini sid is not available.

The dog warden has been contacted regarding a replacement dog bin and a reply is awaited.

Noticeboard: Quotations for the proposed work to the notice board were considered, and **it was agreed** that the Clerk contact JF Property Services to do the work.

The sign for the Defibrillator is made and fixed to the wall.

It has been reported that the overhanging hedges at Woolpack Corner are a problem once more and the landowner will be contacted.

The Parish Magazine would like the contact details of someone for the working group to go into the contacts section of the magazine. **It was agreed** that Peter Whitstone's details should be given.

The meeting was closed at 20.58 for refreshments and reopened at 21.15.

Gordon Jones Playing Field and Play Area: The play area has been completed and the official opening took place on Saturday 27th August. Cllr Michael Hill opened the play area. Notices have been done and put up on the railings.

The cheque has been paid to Lars Laj UK. The Grant and S106 money has been received from ABC and the VAT refund on the play area has been received. Some final snagging is due to take place very shortly.

It was agreed that an additional litter bin be bought and sited just outside the play area.

A contractor has been asked to cut the hedge in the play area and also down the left side of the Gordon Jones Field.

Tenders will shortly go out for the new mowing contract to start next year. The Clerk was asked to contact the football club regarding their views regarding doing the mowing in lieu of paying fees to BPC.

The Play Area opening should be in the Kentish Express for 8/9/16 as the journalist contacted the Clerk.

It was agreed to ask a contractor be asked to quote for tarmacking the basketball area.

Planning and Local Housing: Nothing further to report on Tapley Field. It is understood that Jennifer Shaw at ABC is now involved with this to try and speed things up.

It is understood that work on the two new bungalows in The Weavers should be started this autumn and completed within a year.

S27 and S43 Working Group: Cllr Stevenson-Rouse updated the meeting on the work to-date carried out by the Working Group.

Meetings had been held with Borough Cllr Neil Bell and also Ashford Borough Council regarding the proposed development and community benefits. A meeting had also been held with the Headcorn doctors regarding a possible surgery in Biddenden.

The provision of a new surgery within the village had failed in 2013. The situation now is that 1300 Biddenden residents are registered with the Headcorn Doctors at the New Health Centre. Because of the new Health Centre in Headcorn and the fact that 1300 people from Biddenden go there the doctors said that there was no longer a pressing need for a surgery in Biddenden.

Even If developers were to provide a building, it would have to be built to NHS standards and Funding would be required from NHS England and the CCG, the doctors themselves would not get financially involved.

North Street is not in the centre of the village.

The situation had now changed and a new surgery was not economically viable.

Discussion took place regarding other community benefits and the possibility of a new community/village hall was put forward and a room could remain, as at present, for a doctor.

It was stated that a village hall was being proposed as this was something that the landowner/ developer were in agreement with regarding spend against their potential funding and also that other ideas had been explored but were thought to be too costly or not to benefit the whole community. Hence the recommendation to progress with this, pending comment on whether the parishioners would support this idea or prefer an alternative.

S106 contributions on 20-25 homes would not cover the cost of a new community/village hall. The landowner would be prepared to contribute to such a whole community benefit and a possible sum was mentioned and was in fact the cost of the commercial element at the North St site and which is not directly linked to the amount of benefit offered.

The landowner/developer has indicated he will support the building of a new Community village hall and NOT a “dip into fund” or a contribution to KCC schools budget to carry out maintenance at the school. This is backed up by ABC, and ABC has told the working group that the 106 payments cannot be used as a dip in fund, and should be for a whole community benefit.

This is a limited time offer and may be withdrawn if the landowner doesn't agree to what is proposed. However, it was stated that such discussions would need to take place in closed session as the information is commercially sensitive.

Having received such information from the developer and landowner it was felt important to go to the village with a questionnaire in order to get their views. Discussion took place regarding the questionnaire and amendments to it were proposed following comments from parishioners present. A copy of the draft questionnaire had already been given to the parish magazine as their deadline was earlier than the BPC meeting.

A parishioner stated that the questionnaire was a bit ‘closed’ and it was explained that whilst it did focus on a hall, the premise was that any ideas could be put forward and would be collated. The reason for more questions on the hall was to take the opportunity to find out what people would like to see, if this were chosen, in one go rather than having to send out another questionnaire, as time was very short due to ABC’s deadlines.

There is a deadline for notification to ABC regarding the provision of community benefits of mid-November. If the parish council does not go back to ABC with a suggestion the benefit may be lost.

It was agreed to send out the questionnaire with the amendments made to each residence. Proposed by: Cllr S Parks. Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding. Unanimous.

Police Liaison and Neighbourhood Watch: In June 2016 there were 7 reported crimes:

Anti-Social Behaviour	1
Criminal Damage and Arson	2
Other Theft	1
Vehicle Crime	1
Violence and Sexual Offences	2

PCSO Sinden will not be submitting future crime reports. A decision has been made by his Inspector that his is not required to do this and councillors are pointed to the crime statistics on www.policeuk

Surgeries are held at the church every 5th week. His next surgery will take place at the coffee morning on 6/10/16

Neighbourhood Watch: Report to be given at the meeting. Nothing to report.

KALC: Wednesday 21st September 2016 at 7.30 pm in Committee Room 2

at the Civic Centre, Ashford

Parish & Urban Forum: Their meeting was held on 7th September - details were circulated in advance

Tenterden Forum meeting: 27 October 2016

Community Project Fund: Notices will be going up with a deadline of the end of October.

Village Hall Management Committee: The date of the next VHMC meeting is Wednesday 14 September 2016.

Health and Safety: Nothing to report. The dipping ponds have now been removed and the play area contractors will be back to look at the snagging issues already highlighted and will be notified of those mentioned during the meeting.

Allotments: The allotment hedge needs cutting.

John Mayne School: Mrs Sharon Lewis is now the Headteacher and Mr Stephen Brown is Assistant Head.

15. Finance

a) Approval of cheques for payment. Proposed by: Cllr D Boulding Seconded by: Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse. **Unanimous.**

b) Note accounts to 1 September 2016. Duly noted.

c) Online Banking

Having rung NatWest Business banking it was understood that BACS payments could be made for the Clerk's salary. However, having visited the branch and spoken to them, this advice was not correct. The only way for the Clerk, and perhaps the Cleaner, to receive their salaries on the date they should be paid was to sign up to online banking. This would necessitate the Clerk being a signatory and being authorised to make the payments. Cheques would still require two signatures and this could be the preferred method for general payments, but the Clerk could be one of them outside of meetings if required. **It was agreed** that the Clerk should become a signatory and also to set up online banking in order for the Clerk to pay salaries. Proposed by: Cllr A Lidgett Seconded by: Cllr J Tydeman. **Unanimous.**

16. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
16/01234/AS	Biddenden	Corran, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BL Erection of new garage & workshop in replacement of existing pigeon loft	Support
16/01265/AS	Biddenden	8 Townland Close, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AR First floor extension over existing garage	Support
16/01316/AS	Biddenden	21 Townland Close, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AR Proposed single storey rear extension, garage conversion and extension	Support

17. Correspondence

The Correspondence List was presented. There were no comments.

- 19/7 Email re telecoms funding opportunities on GJ Playing Field . Email circulated. *Further details to be requested.*
- 17/8 Request for a Memorial Tree. *Agreed.*
- 26/8 Email from Biddenden Juniors requesting to site a container for their sponsored mower at the GJ Playing Field and requesting funding. *It was agreed to review this further prior to installation and that a container should be a temporary arrangement. It was suggested that an application to the Community Project Fund be made if funding help is required.*

18. Staffing

- Pension arrangements. Pensions documentation has been forwarded to Cllrs Friend, Tydeman and Stevenson-Rouse to look into this issue and that of the Clerk's gratuity payment currently in the contract of employment. The staging date for the pension is 1 February 2017. Cllr Tydeman agreed to work with the Clerk on this issue.

19. Items for future consideration – A vote was taken and this item was taken in closed session

The Clerk read out a statement regarding an item for information only and was unrelated to housing or S27.

20. Date of Next Meeting: **Parish Council Meeting, Tuesday 11 October 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.**

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk