

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

8 OCTOBER 2013

**APPROVED Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on
Tuesday 8 October at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden**

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

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

2 parishioners attended.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr Bell sent his apologies for absence

2. Parishioners questions

There were no questions.

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Any changes to the Register of Members Interest

There were no changes.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 10 September 2013

Amendments to the minutes had already been circulated. The Chairman asked if there were any comments regarding the minutes. There being none, the minutes were declared a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend Seconder: Cllr D Boulding.

Agreed

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

There were no matters for information not on the agenda.

7. Rural Fire Safety presentation by Mr Chris Weal, Volunteer with Kent Fire & Rescue Service and Report from Cllr Bell

Mr Weal give a short presentation on Rural Fire Safety.

Rural fire safety is very different from urban fire safety. Response times in rural areas are a sensitive issue but response times will not be the 5-6 minutes as in the urban areas. This is because rural areas tend to be larger with older buildings and the response time will be an

additional 3-4 minutes.

Free smoke alarms are available for people over 60, vulnerable people and people with young families. There is also a whole range of safety aids available.

Fire hydrants are usually situated between ½ to 1 mile apart. Biddenden is the largest parish and has a high number of hydrants. The A274 runs the length of the parish and a number of them can be found on the verges. Hydrants need to be accessible and visible with an "H" marked in the road so that the fire service know exactly where they are. Mr Weal had been out looking for the hydrants and many of signs were missing and the hydrants buried. The A274 and A262 do cause problems because of access to the hydrants is made more difficult. He suggested bringing the Water Services Manager to Biddenden to meet with 2-3 councillors and to explore the whole issue and work on it in order to get a good result for the village. There is a map of where the hydrants are from KALC. The Clerk agreed to circulate it.

Questions were asked:

Q: When there is a fire in Biddenden which station responds?

A: Not just one appliance for a local station responds. It is a kaleidoscope. At the time of the fire it depend on where the nearest "on call" station is.

Q: What is the response time for Biddenden?

A: It can be 12-19 minutes depending on where the crews are coming from. The ideal response time is 10 minutes.

Cllr Bell's Report was read out as follows:

1) For the first time since its introduction, I am able to say that I am not aware of any outstanding problems with the new recycling service and a full week has passed without any new emails or phone calls coming in to me. A number of residents had been much inconvenienced since its introduction, particularly on the borders of the borough, but to the best of my knowledge these have now been cleared up. Do please contact me if anyone knows of anyone who continues to have problems.

On the positive side, the recycling levels are actually running higher than expected (so well done one and all!) and the take-up of the paid-for green waste collection (brown bins) has been so high that it has been running at full capacity. I am aware that we have all had to adjust our lifestyles but the enthusiasm with which we all seem to be using the service is both refreshing and reassuring.

2) Ashford town centre is benefitting both from funds and advice from the "Mary Portas" initiative. And I am aware that our own Biddenden High Street shops, pub and restaurants continue to excel whilst trading under equally difficult conditions without this support.

Nonetheless, I do have access to a small fund (known as the Ward Member Grant) and it is my intention to write to our High Street traders to see if there are opportunities to use this fund in support of keeping it as attractive and vibrant as it is today. As always the funds do come with some strings and caveats but all ideas will be gratefully received and considered !

(Please do note that the purpose of the fund is not to replace any existing parish council or Kent county council funding - it is intended to be spent on "new" initiatives.)

8. Co-option selection process

One application has been received and circulated. However, the applicant was unable to come to this evening's meeting and would be away at the time of the November meeting. **It was agreed** to carry out the co-option process at the December meeting.

9. Southside Pavement – Phase 2

A meeting took place on Tuesday 1 October with Cllr M Hill and KHS officers Christopher Cordrey-Moore and Rebecca Bailey. The Clerk, Cllr Lupton and Cllr Friend were in attendance.

Cllr Hill will come back with a costed estimate. Cllr Hill's letter is expected to include details of any contribution required from the Parish Council. The parish council has budgeted £10,000 for the phase 2 project. However, it should be noted that KCC have changed their rules and now seek payment in advance of the work being done.

10. Implementation of the Community-Led Plan

A letter to the Headcorn Surgery has been written enclosing a copy of the Community-Led Plan and asking what their intentions are regarding building a surgery in Biddenden. No reply has been received to-date. Copies of the plans continue to be sent out.

At the meeting held with Cllr Hill on 1st October, a copy of the plan has been given to Cllr Hill. He has agreed to go through it, looking at items in the plan where KCC has been identified as being responsible, confirming areas where KCC does have responsibility, and then providing feedback on how BPC should go about seeking advice. Councillor Hill also requested that the accounts detailing use of his £3000 grant be forwarded to him and that he will seek clearance for any balance to be used for assist in setting up the Speedwatch group.

Retail and Commercial Business

It was agreed to hold an open meeting regarding a business association and ask Alan Reading to speak at it. There is a three month window in order to organise an open meeting

Children Youth and Leisure:

Improve play equipment on the Gordon Jones Field to be led by Gordon Jones Field Group.
Cheeselands Play Area: Meet Cllr Bell to discuss with recommendations
Youth Club Bus: KCC need to advise how to move forward

Village Character and Living: Street Lighting: More or less provision. Look at the lighting in the Cheeselands to Glebelands Footpath. The Transport, Pedestrian and Footpath working group are to look at the issue.

Visible Policing

Action: Cllr Cansdale and Cllr Lidgett

Litter Bins: Review usage of litter bins.

More dog bins: The council has provided enough dog bins.

More seating: Ask a disabled group such as Access Ashford to advise.

Doctors' Surgery: The Council has written to them asking what their future intentions are but a reply has not been received to-date.

Safety and Crime: Cllr Lidgett and Cllr Cansdale to review this issue and come back to the Council.

Street Lighting: This issue was discussed and the Transport, Pedestrian and Footpath working group were asked to carry out a review and night-time survey etc.

The PCSO has regular meetings at the Post Office but very few people attend. The PCSO has offered to attend Speedwatch meetings.

11. Local Needs Housing

The owner of site 8 has refused to sell land for local needs housing and the owner of site 10 has not replied. Tessa O'Sullivan has written to the Biddenden Consolidated Charity to see if it would be willing, in principle, to sell the Tapley Field (site 11). A reply is awaited. No other sites will be approached until a reply is received.

12. Speedwatch

A public meeting was held on 25th September by a group of parishioners to discuss Speedwatch and to see if there was interest in the parish for a group. Sue Brown was elected chair of the Biddenden Speedwatch Group. A constitution is being drawn up for noting by the Parish Council at its November meeting. Two further meetings are scheduled for 10th October (meeting with the police) and 22nd October.

BPC is currently paying for the hall hire for these activities: Hire of hall September 25th £20; Meeting with police and identify sites and volunteer training 10 October £18; 22nd October Volunteer training £18. The BPC booked the hall for 25th September. Provisional bookings have also been made for 10th and 22nd October. Councillors were asked to confirm that

these costs could be included as part of the annual running costs. It was suggested that in future parish council clearance is given prior to any expenditure being incurred unless specifically included in the budget. **It was agreed** that room booking costs could be included as part of the annual running costs and that council clearance is given prior to any expenditure being incurred unless specifically included in the budget.

The meeting closed at 2048 for coffee break and restarted at 2108

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

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office:

- a) The barrier at the entrance to the car park needs repairing as it is leaning and is loose in the tarmac. A quote is therefore being sought.
- b) Arrangements are also being made for the car park hedge to be cut.
- c) An email has been received from a parishioner regarding the wooden posts in the car park as follows:

“... the posts in the village car park that protect the fence at the back of our property need replacing. They were put there by ABC in 1987 after the hurricane.

ABC replaced their damaged fence and because there is a 3ft drop into our garden put the posts in to help prevent cars damaging the fence or worse coming through it into the garden.”

ABC has confirmed that the maintenance of the car park is the responsibility of the Tenant. Cllr Friend is to look at the fencing and report back.

- d) A quote is awaited for the decoration and maintenance of the toilets.
- e) The damaged toilet seat has been replaced.
- f) The toilet grant has been chased as nothing has been heard from ABC since it was applied for.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: The draft minutes of the MF and JM Working Group meeting held on 25th September were circulated with the council papers. Recommendations are as follows:

Ragwort Pulling

- a) It is recommended that in order to encourage wildflowers and to allow timely Ragwort control future rental agreements state: *“The tenant will not cut the field before 1st August each year, without prior approval.”*

Tractorfest

- b) There were concerns about traffic management, and it is recommended that prior to any future event traffic routes are agreed with the Parish Council, and wherever possible getting traffic to flow down the Millennium Field.
- c) There were also concerns about trying to avoid having “arena” and other high impact events in the main wild flower areas. It is recommended that site layout is discussed with the PC to reduce any adverse impact.

Memorial Trees

- d) It is recommended that the Council adopts a policy that the site will be managed at its discretion.
- e) It is also recommended that the bases of the trees are strimmed twice per year, in early spring (May) and early autumn (September). This will allow mowing between the trees.

Routine Maintenance Autumn/Winter 2013/14

- f) Pruning of Avenue trees
- g) Pruning lower limbs on Memorial trees where required
- h) Repair lower dipping pond handrails – it is suggested that this is the last time these are repaired, and that consideration is given to removing this platform when future repairs are needed

Sissinghurst Road Culvert

- i) Repair of Culvert at Sissinghurst Road Gate – this needs an additional culvert pipe fitted and the upstream wall to be rebuilt. It was also agreed Chris Friend would discuss with KHS whose responsibility it is to maintain the culvert. It is recommended that an additional £ 1500 be budgeted in 2014/5 for repairing the Sissinghurst Road Culvert.

Spraying

- j) A letter had been received complaining about spraying. It was agreed that spraying was needed around the edges of fixtures to avoid mower damage. It is not suggested that this practice is stopped.

The council considered the above recommendations and **it was RESOLVED** to agree them en bloc. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding.
Unanimous.

The PCSO has been asked to arrange a meeting with the young people congregating in the Millennium Field car park but no reply has yet been received.

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: The following issues have been reported:

- a) The deep pot hole opened up in the road outside No 39, Glebelands which needs filling.
- b) The street sign indicating “The Meadows” has been missing for some time and apart from the street sign at the junction of North street and Cloth Hall Gardens there is no way that anyone would know where The Meadows starts. Highways have been asked to look into it and rectify this situation.
- c) Highways have been contacted about the sign at Brown’s corner and a reply is awaited.
- d) Work on the village sign has yet to start. It was proposed that the sign which was situated at the base of the village sign be engraved and put into the empty space on the pole. **It was agreed** to use the current sign and engrave it on the back and have it mounted on the pole of the village sign at a cost of £375 + VAT. **Agreed.**
- e) Turf for the village green is still to be laid.
- f) Two new black litter bins have been received and put in place in the two car parks at the Gordon Jones Field and Millennium Field.

The council is asked to consider the replacement of a) one bin by the church to a black bin (£328.99) and, b) a wooden enclosed bin with metal inside to replace the bin by the memorial bench (£248.83). **Agreed.**

- g) The council has requested that a salt bag be delivered again this year.
- h) The post box at Woolpack Corner continues to be followed up.
- i) It was reported that some of the slabs in front of the Lych-gate have come loose and a parishioner has injured themselves. It was noted that this land is not registered. The Clerk was asked to find out from ABC and KCC if they owned the land before any emergency repairs could be carried out. The Clerk was authorised to agree repairs.
- j) Discussion took place regarding lighting in the footpath from The Meadows to Mansion House Close. The TPF working group are to look at it.

Gordon Jones Playing Field and Play Area:

- a) The picnic table outside the toddler play area is to be removed due to breakage and a new one will be purchased.
- b) A quotation for replacing the damaged dog bin by the tennis courts has been received from ABC of £160 plus £45 to install inclusive of VAT. An order has been placed.
- c) Playground inspection: quotations are being sought for items being a medium risk category.

- d) No more has been heard from Biddenden Junior relating to the slitting of the playing and field. The invoice for pitch fees has been raised for 2013/14.

Police Liaison: Biddenden does not have a dedicated Community Warden but cover is provided by the surrounding villages and the Support Warden for Ashford.

Planning and Local Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: A meeting is to be arranged to discuss the latest applications to the Recycling Fund.

Village Hall Management Committee: The next meeting is 5th December 2013.

Health and Safety: Nothing to report other than the damaged picnic table is to be removed.

John Mayne School: It was reported that Mrs Williams will do a report. The Harvest Festival was a great success. The school will join the Choir of Young Voices at the O2 Arena. **It was agreed to put a link on the council's website to the school.**

14. Finance

a) Approval of cheques for payment: The schedule was presented to councillors. There being no further comments the list of cheques was approved for payment.
Proposed by: Cllr A Lidgett Seconded by: Cllr C Friend. **Unanimous.**

b) Accounts to 30 September 2013: The Clerk reported that the statements had not yet been received and therefore would circulate the accounts by email as soon as possible.

c) Bank Accounts: As agreed at the last meeting, arrangements were being made to enter into a 6 month savings bond with Nationwide. However, when the question was asked about the being covered by the £85,000 limit, it turns out that the account is under Nationwide International which is based on the Isle of Man and therefore only £20,000 is guaranteed. This is not in line with information previously given. The account has not therefore been set up and the Council is asked to consider another course of action as the savings bond will not be transferred within Nationwide to be covered by the FSA rules for the next few months. The paper presented at the last meeting is recirculated for information. **It was agreed** that £20,000 should be put in Nationwide and £30,000 in Aldemore.

d) Budget 2014/15 timetable. The Clerk asked councillors to let her have any figures for projects for consideration in the 2014/15 budget as soon as possible.

It was noted that the Annual Return had been signed off by the External Auditor.

15. Planning

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
13/01008/AS	Biddenden	12 Chulkhurst, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8ED Erection of a single storey glazed extension replacing conservatory to the rear.	Support

It was noted that an application for an alcohol licence had been applied for by The Bakehouse. As no further information had yet been received, the Clerk was asked to circulate further details to councillors.

16. Correspondence

The correspondence list had been circulated.

- 25/9 Email from Parish Magazine re profiles of Councillors. **Agreed but councillors would like to write their own profiles, co-ordinated by the clerk.**
- Sept Annual Meeting of Action with Communities in Rural Kent – 11/10 at 5.30 pm, East Brabourne. **No one was available to attend. Apologies would be sent.**

A letter was also circulated from a parishioner regarding moving clay from the churchyard to the Millennium Field. **This was rejected as there is no suitable site on the field for the amount of clay being moved.**

17. Items for future consideration

There were no items for future consideration

- 18. Date and time of next meeting:** **Parish Council meeting 12 November 2013**
7.30 pm, Village Hall, Biddenden
All Welcome

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk