

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

APPROVED MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 FEBRUARY 2013 AT 7.30 PM IN THE VILLAGE HALL, BIDDENDEN

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair) Cllr A Lidgett
Cllr D Boulding Cllr H Ruse
Cllr C Cansdale Cllr J Tydeman
Cllr C Friend
Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

2 parishioners present

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He stated that PCSO Moorey would be asked to make his report after Cllr Bell's report.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from:

Cllr P Harris due to illness
Cllr N Hunt due to business commitments

2. Parishioners' Questions

A parishioner stated that he was happy to answer any questions relating to his planning application.

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

There were no declarations of interest in items on the agenda.

4. Any changes to the Register of Members' Interests

There were no changes to the Register of Members' Interests.

5. Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 8 January 2013

There were no amendments to the Minutes and no comments received at the meeting. The minutes were, therefore, declared a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Unanimously agreed by those who attended the council meeting on 8 January.**

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

ABC has been informed of the vacancy following Cllr Hewitt's resignation, and notices have been put on the notice boards and on the website. If no-one has applied to ABC by 15/2 ABC will notify the Parish Council and it will be able to co-opt a new member. Notices will be

put on the notice boards, website and parish magazine.

7. Report by Cllr Bell, Ashford Borough Council

Cllr Bell stated that it had been an excellent year for recycling. A communications package would be on its way from ABC.

A new “garden suburb” comprising approximately 5,000 houses is being proposed between Leeds and Otham. This will have an effect on the numbers of commuters using Headcorn and Staplehurst Main Line stations.

The recycling centre at Ashford is being re-sited.

Questions were asked regarding recycling and the provision of wheelie bins etc. Cllr Bell did not yet have the details.

Problems had also been experienced at the Ashford recycling centre. The signage still directs to the main site which is under reconstruction and there is no apparent signage to the temporary site. The temporary site is closed on Sundays and Bank Holidays whereas the KCC website states that it is open on those days. There is a limit of 1 m³ which penalises householders living in outlying areas who save up their recycling, causing more journeys and wasted fuel.

Police Liaison

PCSO Moorey reported that between April 2012 and 1 February, fifty crimes had been committed in the parish, representing an increase of 10 for the same period in 2011/12.

The number of heating oil thefts had gone down.

There had been a change of District Commander for Ashford and Chief Inspector Phil Hibben has taken over.

PCSO Moorey used the Post Office to meet local residents and nothing was reported. He is aware that there have been problems in the public toilets.

Questions were asked regarding recent dog thefts in the area. To-date no incidents had been reported in Biddenden.

8. High Street Southside Pavement

An email was written to Cllr Hill by the Chairman as agreed and a meeting with Cllr Hill and KCC Highways to discuss phase 2 of the project has been organised for 1 March at 10.30 with Cllr Friend and the Clerk in attendance.

9. Housing Needs Survey

The Clerk reported that Council’s agreement to explore the matter further and to look at available land has been communicated to Action with Communities in Rural Kent. The next step is for Tessa O’Sullivan to meet with councillors to do a desk-top site search and then

view the sites. Details would then be sent to the planners, who would respond with their comments on each site indicating which have potential for development in planning terms. If the Parish Council is then agreeable, Tessa would then write to the landowner/s of the preferred site/s to enquire whether they would consider selling their land for affordable housing.

Councillors are asked to note the above and to agree a date to meet with Tessa O'Sullivan. The proposed date for the meeting is 19th March at 7.30 pm. It will be a meeting open to the public. **Agreed.**

10. Date of Annual Parish Meeting

The date of the Annual Parish Meeting has been set for Tuesday 23 April. Advice was sought from the Monitoring Officers at ABC and KCC. The KCC Monitoring Officer has indicated that holding the Annual Parish Meeting and receiving a report from Cllr Hill would not breach the election purdah so long as the election was not discussed.

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

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The toilets are still experiencing problems in terms of individuals being less than clean in their behaviour whilst in the toilets. Having spoken to our cleaner at length about the toilets, it appears that the situation with the toilet rolls being stuffed down the men's toilet is not restricted to the two recent occasions where a plumber had to be called. The cleaner has successfully removed toilet rolls on several occasions.

The Council has been advised previously that the only way to prevent damage after the toilets have closed is to have the doors locked by a manual deadlock overnight. The Cleaner is happy to unlock them in the morning but someone else would need to lock them at night. It was agreed to investigate this option further.

It was agreed to source a wall mounted toilet tissue holder/dispenser to either hold the toilet rolls we currently use or a dispenser that uses just tissue to make it more difficult to access the toilet tissue in all the toilets.

The clerk reported that a parishioner had cleared the Post Office guttering. A letter of thanks had been written.

The holly bush has been cut back.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: The new litter bin for the Millennium Field has arrived and is awaiting fixing in place.

Work to fill the potholes in the Millennium Field car park was completed on 4th February.

Work to clear the ivy from the tree between the Jubilee Meadow and Vine House is still in progress.

Following discussions with Natural England regarding entering the Jubilee Meadow into the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, it was recommended that the Jubilee Meadow is added to our current Entry Level Stewardship Scheme for the Millennium Field as the requirements for the Higher Level Scheme would mean that it would need to be opened to access by any school for educational purposes whereas at present the area is dedicated to use by John Mayne school. **Agreed.**

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: An email had been received from KCC detailing changes to the Public Rights of Way structure and new working practices. The impact of the changes will be to reduce the number of Area Officer from 12 to 10 and to increase the number of employees responsible for ground work from 2 to 4.

Some of the potholes at the Meadows have been filled but not all, and therefore Kent Highways have been chased.

Refurbishment of the large noticeboard is still ongoing.

Refurbishment of the village sign is still ongoing.

At the last meeting a parishioner had drawn attention to traffic issues in Smarden Road. Cllr Friend had met with the parishioner and will contact Kent Highways. It was noted that there was an issue with the cutting of the Chart Hills Golf Club hedge bordering the road. The Clerk was asked to contact the golf club to discuss the issue.

It was noted that work had not yet commenced on the new inscription on the Jubilee Stone. The Clerk was asked to contact the contractor.

It was noted that the repairs to potholes on the High Halden Road were 200m either side of the Cot Lane junction.

Kent Highways would be contacted regarding the possibility of a sign by Woodlands Caravan Park notifying drivers that elderly people were crossing as an elderly person had almost been knocked over.

Gordon Jones Playing Field and Play Area: Quotations are awaited for the mowing and maintenance around the village. Therefore the new contract has not yet been signed. The Chairman stated that the note provided by the Clerk to councillors regarding the matter was confidential information. **It was agreed** that as one further quotation was awaited that the decision be left to the Clerk in consultation with the Chairman and Chair of the Finance Committee.

Squash Court Embankment: This insertion of an additional post has been chased up with the contractor and it will be carried out shortly.

A response had been received by ABC regarding additional dog bins. It is suggested a meeting is held with the Dog Warden to agree additional sites. Although ABC would be responsible for the collection subject to easy access, the Parish Council would be expected to purchase the new bins. **It was agreed that** Cllrs Cansdale, Harris and Lupton would meet with the Dog Warden and it was noted that the Parish Council would need to purchase the bins. The Clerk will arrange the meeting.

Tenterden Tigers will be hiring the pitches on 1 and 2 June 2013 for their tournament.

A formal quotation for the Recreation ground sign is still awaited from KCC and this has been chased up.

It was noted that the long trailer on the hard standing by the basketball net was still on the field. The trailer had been used by BEST for the fireworks, but it is currently too wet to remove the trailer without the field being damaged by the wheels.

Police Liaison: See the report given earlier in the meeting.

KALC: Nothing to report.

Parish Forum: It was expected that police rates would increase by 2% this year.

KCC and ABC are organising a new way of dealing with troubled families. There are approximately 96 in the Ashford Borough area. Each family will have one lead person dealing with them. The idea is that someone is almost inserted into the family to make sure things are kept on a more normal footing. It is hoped that this will help these families function better.

The Chairman has asked that Biddenden be included in the circulation of information relating to the Youth Action Group in Tenterden. Other villages have been emailed regarding initiatives, but not Biddenden. .

Recycling: Applications have been invited to the fund and the deadline is 28th February.

Village Hall Management Committee: A meeting to discuss the tennis courts is being organised. The next VHMC meeting is in March.

Community Led Plan: The questionnaire is in the process of delivery and is available on the parish council website. Closing date for completion is 28 February 2013.

Health & Safety: Nothing to report.

Allotments: Tenancy renewal notices are to go out shortly.

John Mayne School: The school won their heats in the area mini basketball match and will

meet the other winners in Tunbridge Wells.

Cllr Michael Hill attended the school recently and answered a range of probing questions.

The school is finalising the recruitment of an Assistant Head Teacher. The current Deputy Head is reducing their working days.

The pupil roll for next year is slightly down and places are available.

12. Finance

- a) **Approval of cheques for payment:** As presented. Proposed by: Cllr D Boulding
Seconded by: Cllr H Ruse. **Unanimous**
- b) **Monthly Accounts:** Previously circulated. The accounts were reviewed and noted.
Unanimous.
- c) **Precept:** The precept was agreed by the Council to be £47,000. In addition to this there is a concurrent functions grant available of £860. This year, however, the form to accept the precept has changed. This is due to the introduction by the government of the Council Tax Support Discounts to those claiming the benefit. In Biddenden this affects 97 households and therefore reduces the parish tax base. A grant has been given to the borough council by the government and 90% of it has been passed on to the parish in the form of a grant of £4100. Having spoken to the ABC Finance Dept the Clerk was told that the parish was expected to claim the grant. With this in mind, together with the wish of the Council not to ask for more than £47,500, the Clerk, with the agreement of the Chairman and Chairman of the Finance Committee, claimed the following:

Council Tax Support Grant	£4,100
Precept	<u>£43,400</u>
Total	£47,500
Concurrent functions grant	<u>860</u>
Total	£48,360

This equates to the same amount that would have been paid to the Parish Council by Ashford Borough Council had the precept been £47,500 plus the addition of the concurrent functions grant. **Agreed.**

13. Planning

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
13/00087/AS	Biddenden	Building rear of 10, High Street, Biddenden, Kent Conservation Area Consent application for demolition of outbuilding	Support
12/01033/AS (DEL) Amended plans. ABC reference 12/01033/AS & 12/01034/AS	Biddenden	Land rear of 6 to 8 High Street Biddenden, Kent Conversion of redundant buildings and erection of extension to create a one bedroom domestic dwelling	Support
12/01428/AS	Biddenden	The Malt House, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BB Replacement of windows and French doors with timber double-glazed windows and doors to north east, south east and south west elevations.	Support
13/00086/AS	Biddenden	Building rear of 10, High Street, Biddenden, Kent Proposed renewal of existing consented planning application 10/00351/AS for replacement outbuilding with minor alterations	Support
13/00088/AS	Biddenden	10 High Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AH Proposed change of use from A1-A3	Support

14. Correspondence

The correspondence list was noted as circulated. There were two letters for action:

- 11/2 Email from BEST re Tractorfest 24 and 25 August 2013. **Agreed subject to weather. The Clerk to contact BEST and request details of their insurance.**
- 16/1 Email from ABC re Budget consultation (circulated for comment as deadline was 14/2/13. Several replies received specifying no comment. **No further action required.**

Councillors had no further questions about items on the correspondence list.

15. Items for future consideration

- a) Post Box at Woolpack Corner. This has been removed without consultation. The Clerk was asked to write to the Royal Mail.
- b) All the road signs are filthy and need to be cleaned. Cllr Friend is to speak to Kent Highways.

The meeting was closed to the public to discuss the next item.

16. Staffing

The Clerk reported that the staff appraisals for the Cleaner and Lengthsman had taken place and discussion took place regarding the appraisals. ***It was agreed*** that the Cleaner and Lengthsman be awarded a 3% salary increase. Proposed by: Cllr A Lidgett Seconded by: Cllr J Tydeman. **Unanimous.**

Pay rises will be implemented from 1 January.

17. Date and time of next meeting: Parish Council Meeting on Tuesday 12 March at 7.30 pm in the village Hall. All Welcome

The meeting closed at 21.20.

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk

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