

These minutes are subject to approval at the meeting to be held on August 14th

Biddenden Parish Council Minutes of the meeting held on July 10th 2007

Present

Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft
Cllr A Barfoot
Cllr Mrs E Cansdale
Cllr Mo Charlton
Cllr M Conway

Cllr C Daly
Cllr C Friend
Cllr T Lupton
Cllr J Rymer Jones - **Chairman**
Cllr P Whapham – **Vice Chairman**

Apology for absence Cllr H Richards

Also present – Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC and 19 parishioners

1 There were no alterations to members Register of Interests

2 **Parishioners questions**

Mr Linnett asked,

- Would a suggested amendment by Ms Clark to the June 12th minutes be adopted? *The Chairman said an appropriate amendment would be made.*
- When was the lease of the PO/toilets /car park finally signed with ABC? *June 28th 2007*
- Why did the Chairman declare an interest in Mrs Scott's planning application? *He was a friend of Mrs Scott.*
- Why was the cleaning contract for the new toilets signed without agreement of the full council? *See item 12 below.*

Mrs Jones asked,

- Would the council reconsider a height barrier to the Millennium Field car park? *Yes*
- Could "no dumping" signs be considered? *Yes*

Mrs Robinson asked,

- Could details of the "Bishop" development proposal be given?
Cllr Bell (ABC) and the Chairman explained the current strategy for new housing in various Ashford villages but said that no precise details of the Bishop plans were yet available – certainly no planning application had been made.

3 **Minutes of the meeting held on June 12th**

These were signed by the Chairman with the following amendments,

Para 7. After bullet points to be Para 8. Delete first sentence as Ms Clark had not complained about the Post Office. Insert "The Chairman referred to the Information Commissioners letter of 7th June concerning a complaint from Ms Clark regarding the Parish Council's failure to supply information requested in her letter of April 5th, as required by the FOIA 2000. The Chairman said a draft reply would be circulated for the agreement of councillors."

Para 15. Delete "for housing"

Para 16 Note, path not closed but gate being locked.

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4 Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on July 2nd.

These were approved and signed by the Chairman.

5 Ashford Borough Council report – Cllr N Bell

Cllr Bell covered six points,

- Post Office Committee. This was disbanded on July 7th with responsibility for the PO building, toilets and car park passed to the new Car Park Group.
- Local Development Framework (previously Ashford Local Plan)
Cllr Bell explained that as part of the national housing targets Ashford (like all Districts) would need to take an amount of new housing development. Part of this amount would be in local villages but no firm decisions had yet been made as to what each village (including Biddenden) would take.
- Recycling
The possibility of a “blue box” scheme for the core of the village was being considered. The Parish Council’s views on this would be helpful. A “downside” was that the parish would lose some of its recycling income. Cllr Bell thought “Wheelie bins” were unlikely in the Ashford area as the Borough was against going to fortnightly collection for domestic waste and Wheelie bins were normally used on a cycle of one week waste and the other week recyclables.
- Weavers parking
The Parish Council and the Borough should “press” KCC for action.
- South side pavement
Cllr Bell referred to the information the Clerk had established from KCC Highways and supported a letter to KCC to try and get the scheme in the 2008/9 budget.
- Ashford developments
Ring road now two way and new shops on target.
His responsibilities at ABC are very busy with the national “No Smoking” legislation and Hygiene and Food inspections.

6 Post Office/toilets/car park

Now managed by the Car Park Group (Cllrs Daly & Whapham)

Cllr Daly said he would like to formally record the Council’s thanks to the previous Committee for all their hard work in achieving the excellent new facilities. Councillor’s agreed unanimously.

Cllr Daly gave an update on the provision of the disabled ramp having spoken to the architect and builder. The delay is with Ashford BC Planning Department and Cllr Bell was asked to bring pressure to bear to resolve the issue.

Councillors were keen that the previous Committee papers be passed to the Clerk for custody. Cllr Bell said this was not a simple task as the files may need editing to remove irrelevant papers but the job would be put in hand. Files are required by the Car Park Group until completion of the disabled ramp and BT cable issues.

7 Police Community Support Officer

Cllr Lupton said that after examining the council's financial commitments until March 2008 he was satisfied the Officer could be afforded. (£13,093 for the first 12 months) For subsequent years the costs would need to be included in the council's budget plans.

It was noted it would be a three year contract with Kent Police with a six month termination clause.

Cllr Conway said when the appointment was imminent then detailed information leaflets should be widely distributed. All agreed.

Cllr Barfoot felt the parishioners were paying twice for a police service – through the Council Tax and again for a PCSO.

Cllr Daly felt it would be good value for money as experience showed crime rates fell once a PCSO was in place.

The Chairman proposed and Cllr Conway seconded that the council apply for the offered PCSO. All agreed.

The Clerk established the PCSO should be in post by Christmas.

8 Other Group reports

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow

Cllr Conway reported that the transfer from a committee to a group was in hand.

Some weeding (eg ragwort) had been carried out, where necessary tree guards had been removed and mowing would soon take place.

Traffic and Pedestrians

Cllr Friend reported that the T & P Committee was dissolved on July 5th and the first meeting of the new Group would be on July 27th. The Group's priorities would be, South side pavement; Weavers car parking; speed reduction by Woodlands mobile home park; street lighting at "black spots". The Clerk was asked to see if the hedge by Woolpack Corner could be trimmed to improve sightlines.

Gordon Jones Field

Notes of a meeting held on June 15th with Tenterden Tigers had been circulated to all councillors. Proposed hiring arrangements for the Field had also been circulated and a revised version is included with these minutes. Further discussion would take place with the Village Halls Management Committee.

For the present it was agreed the Clerk would maintain a "GJ booking diary" and Cllr Charlton would be the council's "site representative."

Cllr Charlton proposed and Cllr Mrs Ashcroft seconded that £120 be agreed for gassing of a mole infestation. All agreed.

Cllr Mrs Cansdale reported that two additional litter bins would be provided in the GJ Field, a new one in the village car park and a further new one by the bus stop.

Also a new large litter container would be provided in the recycling area for non recyclable rubbish.

Cllr Conway commented on the good value of the new CCTV installation and asked that the Clerk write to KSS to express our appreciation of their work.

Youth

Cllr Charlton intended to hold an informal Youth meeting on July 14th to gauge opinion of what activities young people would like in the village.

Police; Local housing

No reports this time.

KAPC and Parish Forum

Cllr Conway would be attending a Parish Forum on July 11th.

Recycling

The Chairman said the Group would be meeting to discuss the possible “blue box” scheme.

Finance Committee

The minutes of the meeting held on June 20th were noted.

9 Planning (See attached for decisions)

The Chairman outlined the Ashford Local Development Framework plans up to 2021 which envisaged some 170 houses being built over the period, spread between 9 villages. No precise details were available now.

Ashford BC has suggested that each village sets up a “Community Workshop” of about 20 parishioners to guide the process in the locality.

The Chairman said this should be an August agenda item with a view to having the Workshop in place by October. Parishioners interested in being members of the Working Group should give their names to the Clerk.

10 Finance (See attached)

The Clerk said the new “Accounts package” had been received and he would input the current financial year data as soon as possible.

11 Correspondence (See attached)

It was noted that replies to the Information Commissioner re Ms Clark’s complaint had been sent.

Results of the Audit Commission’s investigation into complaints by Ms Clark and D Linnett were not expected until early August.

12 Next meeting – August 14th

Councillors asked that the following items be included,

Quality Parish Council status; Parish Plan update; Web site; possibility of CCTV in the main village car park.

13 Toilet cleaning contract

The Chairman returned to the point raised by Mr Linnett in item 2. Cllr Whapham explained that when the toilets were completed they could not be opened until a cleaner was available and as only one person had volunteered for the (advertised) post it seemed sensible to appoint her. As her wages were within the already known parameters it seemed logical to take action and get the toilets open.

Cllr Conway agreed that the “letter of Standing Orders” may have been breached but a common sense decision was taken.

Cllr Lupton thought the action was “prudent but regrettable”.

Cllr Whapham was pleased the toilets were in use and he felt the cleaner was doing a good job for residents and visitors alike.

The Council accepted that Cllr Whapham’s decision was strictly incorrect but no further action was appropriate.

Graham Smith, Parish Clerk. 01622 890596

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