

*These minutes are subject to approval at the meeting to be held on October 9<sup>th</sup>.*

**Biddenden Parish Council**  
**Minutes of the meeting held in the Old Village Hall on**  
**September 11<sup>th</sup> 2007**

Present

Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft  
Cllr A Barfoot  
Cllr Mo Charlton  
Cllr M Conway  
Cllr C Daly

Cllr C Friend  
Cllr H Richards  
Cllr J Rymer Jones - **Chairman**  
Cllr P Whapham – **Vice Chairman**

Also present Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC and 8 parishioners.

**1 Apologies for absence**

Received from Cllr Mrs E Cansdale and Cllr T Lupton

**2 Members Register of Interests**

There were no alterations

**3 Items raised by parishioners present**

Mrs Scales commented that the Council spends too much time “looking backwards” and should move on from the Post Office issues to concentrate on current matters affecting the village.

Mr Webb felt that the recent fun fair on the GJ Field had led to youth trouble and should not be held in future years. Cllrs Charlton, Conway and Daly said they had all visited the fair and considered it to be well organised with no discernable problems. Also the fair organiser had reported no problems. In view of the benefits to the village in terms of providing an attraction and earning an income it was likely it would be welcomed again.

**4 Minutes of the meeting held on August 14<sup>th</sup>**

These were approved and signed by the Chairman with the addition under item 6, Post Office that “Cllr Mrs Ashcroft asked if any Post Office rent had been received and the Clerk said No as he had not yet sent a bill” *Rent has now been received to December 2007*

**Minutes of the EGM held on August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

These were approved and signed by the Chairman after it was explained to councillors that Cllr Lupton’s comments on the Audit Commission annual return had been forwarded to the Audit Commission as part of the return document. *Copy of comments enclosed for councillors papers.*

**5 Reports from Group Chairmen**

Car park and toilets

Cllr Daly reported that the hedges were to be tidied up.

He also said costings would be obtained for a security camera and a cycle security bar outside the low Post Office wall.

He would also check on the “legal wording” for a sign to deter long term parking.

Cllr Whapham reported that our toilet cleaner was likely to be unavailable, due to sickness, for some weeks and that the Clerk had found an alternative.

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### Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow

Cllr Richards reported that considerable hedge cutting had taken place.

### Traffic and Pedestrians

Cllr Friend said some progress was being made on the south side pavement scheme and KCC had been asked for detail of their contractors costs and also a specification for a stronger kerb.

Speed limits by Woodlands mobile home park would not be progressed by KCC as the area does not have an accident record.

Some extraneous road signs had already been removed.

The new school entrance path had been completed.

KCC were now aware of the Weavers parking problems and our suggested solution.

Peter Whitestone would like volunteers to help tidy, one at a time, the village footpaths. *(Details from the Clerk)*

### Gordon Jones Field

The recent RoSPA report on the play area showed various repairs that need attention.

The Clerk said he had not received the report but Cllr Charlton had and he would highlight the work needed.

In the meantime the odd job man would be asked to cut back brambles and paint out graffiti.

Cllr Conway felt it was time the whole play area was considered for new equipment as it was now showing signs of being “time worn”.

### KAPC and Parish Forum

Cllr Conway said there was no report this time but he would go to the next meeting.

### Youth

Cllr Daly tabled a letter of thanks to Tom Swain for his excellent summer sports week. As minuted last time some form of grant should be available to help village children at future years events.

### Recycling

Cllr Rymer Jones tabled Terms of Reference for the new Recycling Group and minutes of the Groups last meeting – which are on the village notice board.

## 6 **Report by Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC**

Cllr Bell said Ashford was conducting a review of its waste collection and recycling policy. At present Biddenden waste was going to landfill as the Allington incinerator was temporarily out of use.

The Ashford Local Development Framework was now closed for submissions and whilst possible sites for development had been earmarked they were still confidential at ABC.

## 7 **New fence scheme around the village car park**

Cllr Richards tabled some photographs/drawings of the proposals which councillors welcomed. The Clerk would prepare the planning application documents.

## 8 **Freedom of Information demands**

The Chairman said there were none outstanding.

## 9 **Audit Commission**

The Chairman referred to a letter from the Audit Commission which referred to three letters from Ms Clark and one from Mr Linnett which the Council had not seen.

Both Ms Clark and Mr Linnett had asked that the Audit Commission should apply to the High Court for the payment for the new Post Office and toilets to be considered unlawful.

The Commission had also posed additional questions and asked for more documents. The Clerk referred to those and the Council accepted his answers with Cllr Conway asking to see the replies before despatch. The Chairman gave an outline of a draft response to the matters raised in the letters from Ms Clark and Mr Linnett which was accepted in principle, subject to agreement by Cllr Conway.

Cllr Barfoot thought all parishioners (not just councillors) should have access to the council's papers.

*(Subsequently the Clerk sought two professional opinions on this matter and the advice was that parishioners are only entitled to ask for specific documents under Freedom of Information rules – not to be able to trawl the council's papers)*

10 **Finance** (See attached)

11 **Planning** (See attached)

The Chairman referred to a letter which all Councillors had received from Mrs Clayden concerning a proposal that a Doctors Surgery could be built on part of the Jubilee Meadow. He said there were two points for the Council to consider,

- Is there is an urgent need to have a dedicated surgery in the village (as opposed to a room in the Village Hall) and if so where should it be?
- The expected increase in housing in Tenterden will add more pressure on Ivy Court and more houses in Biddenden will add to that pressure as well.

After much discussion all councillors supported the need for a new surgery but were at odds on the best location. 3 were for the Jubilee Meadow proposal, 5 against and 1 abstained. A possible alternative site at the end of Cheeselands was supported by 5 Councillors with 4 abstentions.

Cllr Whapham made the point that if part of the Jubilee Meadow was sold there could be considerable income generated for other village schemes.

Other Councillors felt that if one part was sold then pressure would be on to sell more.

12 **Correspondence** (See attached)

Councillors noted that BLAZE had requested permission to hold the Blaze on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. All agreed and also agreed to host the Mayors party.

13 **Items for future consideration**

Proposal by Mr Churton to buy a strip of the Jubilee Meadow

14 **Next Meeting**

October 9<sup>th</sup> 2007

Cllr Mrs Ashcroft apologised in advance for her absence.