

These minutes are subject to approval at the meeting on March 13th 2007

Biddenden Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held in the Old Village Hall on February 13th 2007

Present

Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft

Cllr Mrs E Cansdale

Cllr M Conway

Cllr C Friend-**Vice Chairman**

Cllr B Gaertner

Cllr H Richards

Cllr J Rymer Jones-**Chairman**

Cllr Mrs G Scott

Cllr P Whapham

Also present – Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC and 21 parishioners

Apology for absence – Cllr R Brown

- 1 There were no alterations to the members **Register of Interests**
On this point the Chairman said he, with Cllrs Mrs Ashcroft and Cansdale and the Clerk, had attended an information session given by the Borough Monitoring Officer at Ashford on the Code of Conduct and particularly the “Interests” and “Prejudicial Interests” aspects. All agreed it had been most useful.
- 2 **Minutes of the meeting held on January 9th 2007**
These were approved and signed by the Chairman.
- 3 **Items raised by parishioners present**
The Chairman thanked the Weavers Residents Association for their excellent report on possible remedies for the parking problems in their road. Copies had been passed (by Cllr N Bell) to the relevant officers at Ashford BC and via Cllr M Hill (KCC) to KCC Highways. The Chairman said action would probably be in months rather than weeks in view of the cost implications!
- 4 **Other matters for information**
The Clerk reported that work on the **CCTV** coverage for the sports clubs should start this week. He also reported that the £1500 grant from KCC had been received.
As regards **“Youth matters”** the Chairman said he had been in contact with the youth “manager” at Ashford BC and she would soon be taking soundings from the local youth as to their aspirations and the possibility of a local “Youth Forum”. The Chairman said he was impressed with the approach of ABC.
Two items that may emerge from consultation are a “Youth Shelter” and fishing facilities. As regards the former the Clerk has a lot of information.
Cllr Mrs Cansdale had identified four locations where new **litter bins** were required. The Clerk would ask the relevant Ashford BC officer to contact Mrs Cansdale.
- 5 **Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow update**
Cllr Richards reported that some woodchip has recently been applied to paths and some bird boxes and plug planting had been carried out in association with the school.

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6 Traffic and Pedestrians Committee

Cllr Friend reported that the footpath from Mansion House Close to The Meadows had been surfaced. The gates now need attention to accord with modern standards.

“Speedwatch” training will take place at the end of February.

There had been a KCC/Ashford BC/Parish Council meeting re possible works to the south side pavement. Some £42,500 funding had been identified and more was possible. There will be a further meeting in the new financial year (ie post April) but it is looking hopeful that “smoothing” work will be possible.

Two failed streetlamps were mentioned and Cllr Mrs Ashcroft would follow up.

7 Post Office/toilets/car park report

Cllr Bell said completion of the toilets had been delayed but the roof was now finished and inside work should not take too long.

£150 profit had been achieved from the sale of “First Day” PO stamps.

Cllr Gaertner said we must follow up the possibility of obtaining some refund from the additional sum paid to move the PO cable from under the new toilet. It did not appear to be the fault of the Parish Council. The Chairman said he would pursue the recovery of this £4466.13.

Cllrs Whapham and Gaertner said they were making progress on obtaining a cleaner for the new toilets.

Also they would liaise with Cllr Richards on the need for a new fence/hedge on the pavement side of the car park. *The Clerk subsequently established that any new or moved signs along this hedge line would need Planning Permission*

After competitive tendering the Contract for resurfacing the car park would be let to Messrs Wilson Tarmac in the sum of £7308.59p including VAT. This was proposed by Cllr Friend and seconded by Cllr Whapham. All agreed

8 Ashford BC report – Cllr N Bell

Cllr Bell referred to his items (Weavers car parking, south side pavement and Post Office) and said these had already been covered.

9 Other reports

Cllr Rymer Jones said there would be a meeting of the Recycling Group on February 26th.

10 Planning (See attached)

The Chairman received some maps from councillors outlining their ideas for future village growth.

The Chairman said it was vital that the Council had some ideas of where it would prefer development as Tenterden and its surrounding villages were destined to take some 600 new homes by 2020 and it was inevitable that some would be in Biddenden. We should be in a position to guide the development we might find acceptable eg sheltered housing and affordable homes. The Chairman said it was vital that we sustained the village school and appropriate housing was a key to this.

11 Finance (See attached)

12 **Correspondence** (See attached)

The Chairman discussed the correspondence received from the **Audit Commission** and explained that this had arrived at an awkward time with his being away. In order to meet the Commission's timescale he had discussed the information required (with the Commission) and agreed an initial trawl of papers – he apologised that there had not been time to contact the full council. However depending on the Commission's response to information received he would then involve the full council if required.

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13 **Possible new surgery in Biddenden**

Councillors had received a copy of a letter from Dr Winch outlining his ideas for a new surgery in the general area of the Millennium Field car park.

The Clerk explained the various covenants on the car park, the Gordon Jones Field and the Millennium Field and with these in mind a portion of the Jubilee Meadow behind the Old Mill Court development might be a possible site.

Cllr Whapham proposed and Cllr Rymer Jones seconded that some council owned land be made available for the development.

Cllrs Ashcroft, Friend, Gaertner, Rymer-Jones and Whapham supported the proposal, Cllr Richards voted against and Cllrs Cansdale, Conway and Scott declared an interest and did not vote.

In the light of this decision Dr Winch said he would develop his plans to a stage of seeking Planning Permission.

It was agreed the views of the villagers should be obtained on the site chosen.

14 **Cranbrook offices of Tunbridge Wells BC**

Cllr Gaertner said these sub offices of Tunbridge Wells BC were due to close and as many Biddenden residents used Cranbrook he felt we should support the Cranbrook people in trying to keep the offices open. It was agreed the Clerk should write a supportive letter.

15 **Future meetings**

March 13th – next Council meeting

March 31st - 10am to noon in the Village Hall. A meeting for prospective candidates for the May 3rd election to hear about Parish Council work.

April 24th – 7pm in the Village Hall. Annual Parish Meeting – all welcome.

Graham Smith, Parish Clerk. 01622 890596

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