

*These **DRAFT** minutes are subject to approval at the meeting on April 8th 2008*

Biddenden Parish Council

Minutes of the meeting held in the Old Village Hall on March 11th 2008

Present

Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft

Cllr A Barfoot

Cllr Mrs E Cansdale

Cllr M Conway

Cllr C Daly

15 parishioners also present

Cllr C Friend

Cllr T Lupton

Cllr H Richards

Cllr J Rymer Jones - **Chairman**

Cllr P Whapham – **Vice Chairman**

Apology for absence – Cllr N Bell, Ashford BC

Before the start of the meeting the Chairman asked all present to stand for a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Brenda Swain, a previously long serving member of the Council, who died recently.

- 1 Minor alterations to members Register of Interests had been advised to the Clerk by Cllrs Lupton and Rymer Jones
- 2 Items raised by parishioners present
Mrs Daly (Biddenden W I Chairman) said she felt she was talking on behalf of many parishioners in urging the Council to help progress the provision of a doctors surgery in the village. She felt it was vital for the Council to be active in seeking a solution to the problem.
- 3 Minutes of the meeting held on February 12th 2008
These were approved and signed by the Chairman with Para. 5 (CCTV), last sentence, amended to read "The Council agreed to the scheme subject to a night time demonstration of its effectiveness and clarification of legal requirements."
- 4 Ashford Borough Council report
In the absence of Cllr Bell the Chairman reported a government survey that was being undertaken by the English Housing Association. It was possible a parishioner may be asked to participate.
- 5 Reports from Group Chairman
Car park, toilets and Post Office
Cllr Daly said he had a recent meeting with the architect and builder to clarify any remaining issues so that formal completion of the project could be signed off and remaining "retention monies" paid. The only remaining "major" item was the handrail by the steps.
CCTV. After confirmation of the success of the night time trial of the equipment and clarification of the legal constraints it was agreed to go ahead with the K&S Security scheme at £3100. The Clerk reported ABC had no problems with this project and would be happy to inspect after installation.

Cllr Richards was concerned that a RADAR lock had never been fitted to the disabled toilet. Cllr Daly said the police did not favour this and preferred our existing time locks on all toilets. However Councillors agreed they would like a RADAR lock fitted. *(The Clerk subsequently established from ABC that a RADAR lock was purely optional as all our toilets offered equal access during opening hours)*

Cllr Richards was also concerned that one electric meter covered both the toilets and Post Office. The Clerk explained that the bills were split 50/50 with the Post Office as this seemed reasonable. Councillors agreed to this arrangement until such time as the building ceased to be a Post Office.

Cllr Lupton asked for clarification of the refunds received from BT for the wrong positioning of the communications cable into the Post Office. *Details are,*

Paid to BT 30.12.06 £4466 (inc VAT recoverable £665)

Refund September 2007 £1090

Refund March 2008 £2961

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow

Cllr Richards said working parties had been restricted by the wet weather. He reported a field gate latch would be fitted to the school footpath gate.

Cllr Richards asked for an update on the proposed MF car park height barrier. *(The Clerk would check)*

Traffic and Pedestrians

In view of another accident at the junction of Cot Lane and the Headcorn Road Cllr Friend said he would be contacting Kent Highways to see if the 40mph limit near Cot Lane could be moved further north to give added "approach control" to the bend.

It was agreed Kent Highways should be approached to see if we (or they) could fit direction signs into the Gordon Jones Field. *(The Clerk would follow up)*

Cllr Richards agreed to remove the ivy from the village green tree that is causing obstructed viewing when joining the main road by Turners Stores.

Cllrs Friend and Whapham had met Mr Burns from English Heritage about possible improvements to the south side pavement. They felt it had been a very positive meeting and Mr Burns would consult with KCC and Ashford BC before coming back with his suggestions. Cllr Conway was concerned that the pavement should be preserved and asked to be involved in any future meeting.

Cllr Richards reported that surface water from the car park was draining along the Bethersden Marble pavement. It was suggested it could be diverted along the adjacent hedge lines. Cllr Mrs Ashcroft agreed to follow up with KCC Highways the essential verge repairs to Fosten Lane.

Gordon Jones Field

Cllr Mrs Cansdale reported on urgent repairs needed to the children's play area to meet RoSPA requirements. Wicksteed had quoted £2500 for the necessary work and Cllr Friend agreed to seek a second quote. It was agreed the work was essential to maintain a safe play area and should proceed on the basis of the lowest acceptable quote. Cllr Hill (KCC) would be approached to see if a KCC grant was available. *(The Clerk would contact Cllr Hill)*

Police

A liaison meeting is scheduled for March 12th.

A public “PACT” police meeting will be held in the Village Hall on April 5th starting 10am. This is to establish community priorities for local policing. It would be advertised in the village.

Local Housing

Nothing to report

KALC

Nothing to report

Youth

Cllr Daly said this year there would be a two week sports coaching event at a price of £60 for 5 days. Each week could accommodate 48 children. 40 places have already been booked for the first week leaving 54, in total, available.

Councillors wished these places to be available to village children and after much discussion felt the John Mayne Trust was the right body to offer a “subsidy” to any family unable to meet the costs. If the Trust needed to they could approach the Recycling Group for help. The Group could recommend its funds for this purpose.

The Chairman said “Kool Kidz” had also approached him for Council support and the Recycling Group would consider this.

Parish Website

Cllr Lupton referred to his earlier paper on our Website, currently managed by Mrs Bell. It was agreed that the BPC Website is the official Website of the Parish Council. Its primary purpose is to make available up to date information on the Parish Council’s business including contact information, dates, agendas and minutes of Council meetings. The Website may also provide other information and contacts relevant to the parish. This will be a secondary function and the council will not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information.

A review of the current website would be carried out by Cllr Lupton and Mrs Bell and any recommendations submitted to the Council.

6 Finance (See attached)

The previously circulated Risk Assessment was discussed and amendments suggested. The Clerk would update with Cllr Lupton.

7 Planning (See attached)

The Chairman reminded Councillors of a follow up “Community Workshop” on April 17th.

8 Doctors Surgery

Cllr Daly opened the discussion by saying there were some 1400 Biddenden residents registered at Headcorn surgery. Biddenden Village Hall surgery operates as a “branch” of Headcorn. There was agreement that Biddenden needs its own purpose built surgery but dissent as to where it should be.

Cllr Richards felt it need not be in the village central area as car parking was a key requirement. He also referred to the Jubilee Meadow appeal in 2002, to which a number of parishioners contributed, and he felt some may ask for their contributions to be returned if the Meadow was used as a surgery site.

Cllr Barfoot did not think it was an issue for the Parish Council and it was for the doctor’s to find their own site.

Cllrs Conway and Richards were against the use of Gordon Jones, Millennium Field car park or Jubilee Meadow lands for the surgery.

Cllrs Lupton and Whapham considered the area of the Jubilee Meadow behind Old Mill Court to be a good site but appreciated there would be some opposition. If the Jubilee Meadow proposal was pursued it may be necessary to conduct a village referendum to gauge the degree of support.

Cllr Daly said an advantage of selling some Parish Council land would be that the Council would obtain monies for other projects and that a scheme could be developed quickly and not be dependent on a spin off of a village housing development going ahead.

Cllr Daly proposed that all Parish Council owned land be checked as to any covenants/restrictions as to its use and when this information is to hand firmer decisions can be made. It was agreed the issue would be carried forward to the April meeting.

9 Correspondence (See attached)

Cllr Richards asked that a list of letters sent be added to the monthly Correspondence list.

10 Future matters

Cllr Mrs Ashcroft asked if the May 13th (annual statutory) meeting could be altered as both she and the Chairman were unavailable.

As the meeting MUST be in May the 27th is a suggestion. This could combine the May and June meetings.

Would councillors please advise the Clerk if this is acceptable.

The meeting close at 10.35pm.

Graham Smith, Parish Clerk

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87/2007