

DRAFT MINUTES

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

DRAFT Minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on Thursday 3 December 2009 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden

Present: Cllr A Barfoot (Chair)
Cllr Mrs E Cansdale
Cllr H Richards

Mrs Alison Swannick (Clerk)

1. **Chairman's opening remarks**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lupton as he was on holiday.

3. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 June 2009**

There were no amendments to the minutes and they were approved as being a true and proper record of the meeting.

4. **Any matters arising from the minutes of 30 June 2009**

The Clerk had been asked to find out what level of protection the Council's funds had from the bank. It was reported that as the Council was not classed as a profit making organization, the bank would protect funds at the same level as personal account holders at £50,000. The Chairman felt, therefore, that a second bank account elsewhere should be opened to house the additional funds. The Clerk would, therefore, get details from HSBC, Lloyds TSB and Co-op.

Ms Clark's letter of 3 November was discussed. The Clerk was asked to check that no Post Office rental payments from 2008/2009 had been paid in after 31 March, thus putting them into financial year 2009/10. The Clerk was also asked to check whether it was possible to take out Loss of Rental insurance and to check the Post Office Lease.

Discussion took place regarding Ms Clark's request for a breakdown of the workings out of the salary back payment to the former clerk of £5000. It was felt that this may be subject to the Data Protection Act as it would be on his personnel file, and that anything confidential or which was discussed in a closed session

DRAFT MINUTES

should not be provided. Information on this subject that was discussed at BPC meetings or noted on payment schedules should be provided. The Clerk would check with KALC regarding this request.

5. Consider the Budget Proposals

The Chairman distributed copies of the proposed budget for discussion. Each point was discussed and Councillors were happy with the budget as presented. The Chairman stated that should the Council continue to spend at its current level then the reserves would quickly dissipate and therefore action was required. If spending continued the possibility of increasing the precept to maintain reserves would need to be discussed.

The cost of the PCSO was discussed in detail and it was felt that Kent Police should now pay for the PCSO or perhaps the Village should share the PCSO in order to cut the cost. The Village's contribution would only increase over time unless action was taken.

It was felt that the PCSO had made a positive contribution and that as a pilot scheme it had been successful, but that costs should be taken into account and discussed further as continuing financial support would take funds away from other areas.

It was agreed that three versions of the budget should be presented to the Parish Council: the version presented at the Finance Committee of 3 December; a second copy without the PCSO; and a third showing an approximate increase of the precept by 9%.

Concern was expressed that there was major work required in the three car parks in the future.

6. Consider Post Office/Car Park costings

The costings for the Post Office/Toilet/Car Park were distributed and discussed. The grant for the toilets was discussed as ABC had told the Clerk that the grant was dependant upon the annual accounts – no grant had yet been received for 2009/10. It was discussed that the grant was not automatic and that it should not be considered a permanent contribution. The Chairman considered that a longer period of time needed to be examined in order to gain a better understanding of costs before any decision regarding the future of the car park and toilets could be considered, and **this was agreed**.

It was also felt that should the PO lease be handed back to ABC, should it then become unprofitable ABC might put in any tenant regardless of suitability.

DRAFT MINUTES

7. Management Accounts

The Clerk reported that a Cash book was now in place and statements from April 2009 onwards were now being reconciled.

A General Ledger was also now in place and a copy of both this and the cash book had been forwarded to the Chairman for comment. It was suggested that a column for Legal Expenses be added to all sections.

A Trial balance was to be set up and linked in. This was on-going, but progress had been made and everything would hopefully be finalised in the near future.

8. Items for future consideration

Groups need to forward requests for funding as soon as possible.

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.