

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 28 April 2009 at 7 pm in the Village Hall

Present: Cllr J Rymer-Jones (Chair) Cllr C Daly
 Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft Cllr T Lupton
 Cllr D Boulding Cllr H Richards
 Cllr Mrs E Cansdale Cllr H Ruse
 Cllr M Conway

Mr Graham Smith (Clerk)
Mrs Alison Swannick (incoming Clerk)

(Cllr Ruse joined the meeting later due to attendance at an overlapping meeting)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from:

Kent County Councillor Cllr Hill
Borough Councillor Neil Bell
Cllr A Barfoot
Cllr C Friend
Cllr H Ruse

2. Approval of the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 22 April 2008

The minutes were read out to the meeting. There being no objections or alterations, the Chairman signed the minutes as being a true and proper record of proceedings.

3. Chairman's report from Cllr J Rymer-Jones

Cllr Rymer-Jones read out his report. A copy of the report is attached.

4. Policing report

Last year 204 cases were reported to police. This is a reduction of 182 cases. Due to the presence of PCSO Peel Biddenden has the lowest crime figures of any parish in this area. It should be remembered that if a crime is not reported then it is not recorded.

It has been noted that there is a problem with parking on the double yellow lines outside Turners Stores.

At a police meeting attendees were asked what the three major priorities for the parish to report to police. These were considered to be: speeding; traffic control in the village; vandalism. Biddenden does have vandalism and the toilets have been vandalised on several occasions. There are also disturbances caused by youths and bottles being smashed in the car park. There have been a total of 13 crimes in total reported in a 6 month period.

5. Ashford Borough Council report from Cllr N Bell and questions to Cllr Bell

Cllr Bell has given his apologies for absence.

6. KCC report (To be read in the absence of Cllr M Hill on KCC business)

The Clerk read out Cllr Hill's report.

7. Reports from other councillors

Cllr Cansdale: Local Housing and Gordon Jones Playing Fields. Cllr Cansdale reported that as Chair of the planning group, meetings were held between council meetings to discuss any planning issues arising such as site visits being required.

There had been discussion within Ashford Borough Council about stopping sending paper plans and therefore having to show plans to councillors on screens. However, such equipment could cost approximately £1000 to purchase.

She reported that the Gordon Jones Playing Field was in regular use by football clubs. It was hoped that it may be possible to make the play area bigger.

Cllr Ashcroft reported that she is on the Traffic and Pedestrians group and helps out where needed on other issues.

Cllr Richards: Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow group. Everything is currently going to plan. Revenue is still being received from the Countryside Stewardship Scheme. There are no major projects on going other than the wild flower project and the project for another pond and disabled walkway in an area of the Jubilee Meadow.

Allotments: The council is hopeful that an allotment site will be identified.

Cllr Lupton: Chairman of Finance Committee and a Trustee of the Village Hall Management Committee representing the Parish Council.

Cllr Lupton read out a report on the Council's finances. A copy is attached.

Cllr Daly: Car park, Toilets and Post Office. Cllr Daly reported that the car park fence was now up courtesy of British Gates. Bloomsbury's had donated the hedging. He thanked both companies for their help and support.

There has been a return of vandalism in the car park. There has also been flooding in the toilets caused by the cistern being pulled off the wall twice. It has been reported to the police and they are keeping an eye on the situation. Fly tipping has also returned to the car park.

Cllr Friend: Pavements and Highways. Cllr Friend reported that the main focus had been on the southside pavement. He was optimistic that funds will be available from KCC and Highways.

Proposed Drs Surgery: A meeting was held with the Headcorn Practice Manager. The chance of anything being built this year is slight as the practice is concentrating on the new surgery in Headcorn. It was hoped that a planning application would be put in to Ashford Borough Council in September or October this year. It will consist of facilities for a doctor, a nurse and a pharmacy. It will be open five days a week.

Cllr Boulding: Webmaster and Youth. The website is currently being updated. If anyone has any comments they should let Cllr Boulding know. With regard to Youth, a list of names of children interested in participating in the design of a new play area has been put together with the help of the PCSO. A meeting is to be arranged with Cllr Cansdale.

Cllr Barfoot is in charge of flooding and any concerns about flooding should be directed to him.

8. Parishioners' questions and discussion

Parishioner 1 noted that the draft minutes were not issued on the website or the notice board within a fortnight of a meeting. This meant that parishioners did not get to see minutes before the next parish council meeting. He also questioned whether the council had considered becoming a quality parish council. The Parishioner stated that it was important that councillors were elected to serve the village and get behind decisions made and fully support them. The Chairman stated that the issue of minutes would be considered by the council at the next meeting.

Parishioner 2 was interested in the hedge and gateway. The hedge is behind the gate so how does it open? The chairman stated that the gate was there for decorative purposes and did not open.

Parishioner 3 asked about the possibility of having CCTV in the car park in view of the vandalism in the toilets. The Chairman stated that it was a case of cost and efficiency and the cost would be in excess of £3,000.

Parishioner 4 asked about the proposed cycle track from Headcorn through to Tenterden. It was reported that an approach had been made to the Parish Council on this issue five years ago and that the Council had rejected it. It would probably be better if the route went from Biddenden to Tenterden. It was hoped that there would be some action on it in the next 10 years. However, the cost at the moment is approximately £100 per meter and the route is 10km long. The Chairman thought there might be mileage in approaching the Primary Care Trust with the project on a fitness basis. Everyone was thanked for helping.

The Chairman stated that the price of the Parish Magazine had been raised at the Parochial Council and that it had been proposed that the price be increased from 45pence to 50 pence. It was noted that parishioners thought it was an excellent publication, an attractive product and a credit to the village.

The ladies were thanked for organising the refreshments.

The Chairman stated that Mr Whitestone will be leaving the village shortly.

A parishioner thanked the Parish Council for all that it had done in the last twelve months.

The meeting closed at 2025.