

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

**Minutes of the meeting held on
Tuesday 8 December 2009 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden**

Present: Cllr T Lupton (Chair) Cllr C Daly
Cllr Mrs J Ashcroft Cllr V Evason
Cllr A Barfoot Cllr H Richards
Cllr D Boulding Cllr H Ruse
Cllr Mrs E Cansdale
Cll M Conway

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

There were 8 parishioners present.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Friend as he was delayed due to work commitments

2. Parishioners' Questions

Steve Reeves-Vane of Biddenden Boys Football Club, thanked Cllr Conway for suggesting that he contact Cllr Hill for funding as this had proved worthwhile. He asked if there had been any progress regarding the next football season following the meeting of football clubs on 23 September. The Chairman said that another meeting would be arranged hopefully before the next Council meeting.

Mr Reeves-Vane also reported that PCSO Peel had visited Kool Kidz the previous Friday regarding the path to Kool Kids. The path is very dark during the winter months and makes it difficult for parents collecting children at 6pm. He asked if the Parish Council would be able to help with lighting. The Chairman said that this issue would be dealt with during the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Evason to his first meeting of the Parish Council.

3. Any Declarations of interest in items on the agenda

Declarations were received as follows:

Cllr Mrs Cansdale	-	Prejudicial interest in the Doctors Surgery
Cllr Conway	-	Interest in the Doctors Surgery

Cllr Boulding	-	Listed Building Consent, The Dye House
Cllr Richards	-	Allotments
Cllr Ruse	-	Issue of school footpath as he is also a Governor
Cllr Evason	-	Planning Application for Woodlands

4. Any changes to the Register of Members Interests

There were no changes.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2009

An amendment had been made to the spelling of a Parishioner's name. There being no other amendments, the minutes were signed as being a true and proper record. Proposed: Cllr H Ruse and seconded: Cllr M Conway.

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

The Chairman asked councillors to copy the Clerk in on any correspondence which is council business to ensure that the central files are correct. He also reiterated the importance of remembering that when entering into official correspondence that they were doing so as councillors and not on a personal basis.

7. Report by Councillor Bell, Ashford Borough Council

No report was received.

8. Budget 2010/11

Cllr Barfoot reported that the budget had been discussed at a meeting of the Finance Committee on 3rd December.

Cllr Barfoot reported that budgets for 2010/11 and together with a three year forecast had been prepared. This exercise indicated that at the current level of income and expenditure the council would be reducing its reserves to unacceptable levels by 2011/12, and leaving the council in a position where it could not afford to implement any projects.

For the last couple of years there had been a deliberate policy of running the Council at a loss. There had been several reasons behind that decision: to avoid increasing the precept; to allow for the funding relating to the PCSO, and also to reduce the Parish Council's reserves to a more realistic level.

The suggestion for 2010/11 is to run the budget without the need to increase the precept and reduce the reserves further. This is more in keeping with the financial regulations adopted by the Council earlier in the year.

Operating Income and Expenditure is budgeted to remain at similar levels to the current year, but Council should note that the three-year forecast has assumed that the precept will increase by 2.5% per year.

All sections of the general budget were examined and explained. However, it was noted that the most contentious area was the PCSO funding. Although it was agreed funding for the PCSO be included for 2010/11, how the post was funded needed to be reviewed. There is a need to look at alternative funding methods for the PCSO such as Kent Police.

It was agreed that the Police Liaison Group pursues this matter to see what alternative is available.

The Chairman stated that the budget included provision for the following projects:

£5,500	Allotment provision
£2,000	Contingency for costs relating to the Drs Surgery
£15,000	Jubilee Meadow & Millennium Field special projects
£5,100	Resurfacing of the Gordon Jones Playing Field Car Park
£5,700	KCC grant for the Southside pavement
£10,000	PC contribution towards the Southside pavement
£43,300	TOTAL

Discussion moved on to the amount of the precept and the fact that over the next three years it would have to increase. It was suggested that it would be better to slowly increase the precept rather than leave it and then increase it by a larger amount. **It was proposed** to increase the level of the precept from £44,000 to £46,000 for the financial year 2010/11. This was proposed by Cllr Ruse and seconded by Cllr Daly. The Chairman asked for a show of hands and the proposal was carried.

It was proposed that the budget for 2010/11 be adopted as amended. This was proposed by Cllr Conway, and seconded by Cllr Cansdale. The Chairman asked for a show of hands and the proposal was carried.

A copy of the budget as approved is attached.

It was agreed that an agenda item for the February meeting should be to look specifically at longer term financial planning of the Council including the impact of funding the PCSO.

9. Proposed Allotments

A letter had been received from BTF on behalf of Mrs Dowsey. One of the requests was that the Parish Council pay the legal fees relating to putting in place a Farm Business Tenancy. The Clerk had rung BTF and asked how much these fees might be and was told approximately £350 plus VAT. The Council was asked to approve that the Council paid the legal fees for drawing up the agreement. **This was agreed.**

The Chairman closed the meeting to ask Mr Harris if he had any questions or points that he wished to make. He asked if he might write to thank Mrs Dowsey for agreeing to rent her land. The Chairman felt this should wait until the agreement had been signed.

The Chairman re-opened the meeting.

10. Parish Plan

The Clerk reported that the letter to village groups was ready but that she was completing the compilation of addresses so that all the letters went out together.

11. High Street, Southside Pavement

The Clerk reported that a letter had been received from Russell Boorman stating that agreement had still not been reached regarding an acceptable solution and so there were no proposed estimate of costs.

12. Proposed Drs Surgery

The Chairman read out a letter from Headcorn Surgery to their solicitors, copied to the Council requesting that a draft lease be prepared, together with a sketch of the proposed building.

It was noted that the issues raised at the meeting with Headcorn Surgery on 21 March 2009 relating to the surgery and the lease had not been addressed and therefore neither party was in a position to approach their solicitors to draw up a lease. The Clerk was asked to write a letter to Drs Winch and Thorpe explaining the position, attaching the notes of the meeting held on 21st March, and requesting a meeting.

Cllr Daly reported that he had attended a meeting of the Headcorn Surgery Group and that he was able to speak to the Drs about the proposed Biddenden surgery.

They apologized that the Headcorn surgery plans had taken up so much of their time, but believed that the Biddenden surgery will be completed ahead of the Headcorn surgery.

13. Meetings timetable for 2010

A request has been received that the Parish meeting be changed from Tuesday 27 April to Wednesday 28th April. **It was agreed.**

14. Memorial Stone

A formal quotation had been received from Mr Newton at Burlite regarding the Memorial Stone. The estimate was to clean the stone and restore the existing inscription at a cost of £350 plus VAT. **It was agreed** that the quotation be accepted and the work carried out.

It was reported that if the Council wished to add an inscription regarding the Diamond Jubilee then it would not present a problem.

15. Reports by Group Chairmen

Car park, toilets and Post Office: A radar lock has been fitted to the disabled toilet with (six) keys being available to Councillors through the Clerk. The existing time lock has been disconnected.

The Group proposed an increase of £1000 for the 2010/2011 budget to meet the ongoing costs of criminal damage, vandalism and extra maintenance.

It was reported it is proposed to purchase anti graffiti paint for the back of the Gents toilet door. Sue Boon has quoted £100 to purchase the paint and paint the door.

It was noted that the switch on the corner outside needed to be moved to the top under the eaves. Quotations would be required from an electrician.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: Quotations had been received regarding the fencing for the area around the garden by the school. The cost was £3500 and approximately 80% would be claimed back from Natural England. **This was agreed.** Quotes were to be given to the Clerk.

The signs had now been purchased at a cost of £184.

Discussion took place regarding the lack of lighting along the footpath which crosses the Jubilee Meadow from the car park to the school. Historically, there was a security issue at the School, with strangers walking through the premises during School hours, and a safety issue due to the density of cars in the High

Street at drop-off and pick-up times. These issues have been resolved with security fencing and the Jubilee Meadow footpath.

The footpath is very dark after 4.00 pm in mid-Winter, and the School has provided an additional pathway from the H9gh Street across the playground to Kool Kidz. The Chairman suggested that the issue should be taken out of the PC meeting and it was agreed that Cllr Ruse, Cllr Richards and Cllr Conway would meet to discuss the matter further and come back with recommendations.

Traffic and Pedestrians: In Cllr Friend's absence, the Clerk read out an email report from Cllr Friend. The issues arising during the month included:

1. Concern from Mr Watson regarding access views from Church Cottages in Sissinghurst Rd and whether he could erect a mirror. and the reply received from Jennie Wickenden.(Copy attached)
2. Concern from Sue Brown over road markings at the school crossing and the reply from Jennie Wickenden (Copy attached)
3. Reply from Russell Boorman to Councils letter regarding the Southside pavement report. (Letter dealt with under Southside pavement)

Further query from Mr Watson of Church Cottages as to whether a Concealed Entrance sign could be erected in lieu of a mirror. Awaiting reply.

The issue of flooding was raised in the side road by the island. Cllr Ashcroft agreed to deal with this.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: Cllr Cansdale reported that a meeting is to be arranged with Cllrs Richards and Boulding to discuss playing field arrangements for the 2010/11 season. A mowing quote from KCC had arrived. Cllr Cansdale and the Clerk were asked to meet with KCC landscaping to talk through the mowing contract and find out what additional mowing was done for Tenterden Tigers.

Police Liaison: Cllr Daly reported that he had attended a very good Crime Reduction Conference last week in Ashford addressed by the Chief Constable and the Chairman of the Kent Police Authority. As a result he was invited to join a working party to look into the possibility of setting up a **Partnership Safety** initiative for Local Business with the aim to combat Business Crime in the local area. He will report back on any progress.

Attempts had been made by both email and telephone to contact Sgt McNeil with regard to reviewing the hours that PCSO Peel spent in the village. To-date no reply from Sgt McNeil has been received.

KALC and Parish Forum: Cllr Conway presented a report on the proposals for the Ashford Custody Suite, which had been discussed at length at the KALC meeting on 2nd December:

The Meeting was attended by the Chief Constable of Kent and Officers. Mrs Ann Barnes, Chair of the Kent Police Authority, also attended as an independent observer.

It was stated by the Chief Constable that the closure of the Ashford Custody Suite will enable the force to be more efficient as it would release constables for essential policing duties. Most of the time the Ashford suite only held three detainees and this tied up 11 staff. Kent has three custody suites whereas most counties only maintain one. The housing of detainees in Folkestone would release 11 staff for other duties and the dedicated acceptance centre would enable the custody process to be quicker and much more cost effective. Travel times to Folkestone, from areas in Kent, have been taken into consideration but as most arrests are made south of Ashford time taken to travel there by Police Officers is more than compensated by the fast track processing. Arrests of people made in the Medway area are processed mainly in Dover.

To upgrade the Ashford Suite would cost £100,000 and the ongoing maintenance would be a further expense. It is often necessary to call in Doctors to a custody suite, which is very costly, but at Folkestone, where there will be more detainees, it would be less expensive per head. Also at Folkestone there is a dedicated Nursing Team.

Cllr Conway felt that it was highly likely the Custody suite would be closed.

Another report covering other items on the Agenda will be presented at the next Council Meeting after the KALC Minutes have been received.

Youth: Cllr Cansdale reported the youth van has been in Sandeman Way and Cheeselands. It is in The Meadows this evening and there appear to be a number of interested young people.

Housing: Two couples applied to buy the house in Cheeselands, one couple with local connections has been selected. Subsequently, another house has become available in Cheeselands, and the second couple, also with local connections, has been offered the house.

Recycling: All cheques to successful applicants to the Recycling Fund have been written. The Recycling Group would like to ask Cllr Evason to investigate if there is a possibility of having a recycling point in Woodlands.

Information Group: A Data Protection Act issue has arisen and the Clerk has pointed out that the Council does not have one. **It was agreed** that the

Information Group should address this issue.

Webmaster: The new, improved website is now in operation. Some pictures are needed.

Village Hall Management Committee: Cllr Richards reported that he had attended a meeting of the Village Hall Management Committee and issues involving the Council had been raised.

The situation regarding the water meters and the bowling green needed to be sorted out. There are two meters and they need to be read concurrently.

It was pointed out that the sign pointing to the playing fields has not been put up. Cllr Mrs Ashcroft agreed to follow this up with ABC.

The issue of the repairs to the tarmac had been raised. The Clerk reported she had contacted two companies, one of whom could not tackle the tarmac. The second quotation did not cover what was required. Cllr Richards agreed to write a specification.

The area between the Malt House and Mill Court is not well lit, and it was therefore difficult to see the sleeping policeman. It was suggested that they might be painted white.

16. Finance

The minutes of the Finance Committee meeting held on 3 December were circulated. These will be discussed at the next council meeting..

It was noted that a Parish Council account had previously been in operation with British Gates. Cllr Richards agreed to look into resurrecting the account.

The list of cheques for payment were approved for payment. An additional cheque to Iden Signs for £184 was approved and will be added to the list.

17. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled.

Application No.	Location and Description	Application Type	Decision
09/00194/TC (DEL)	West Wing, Old Cloth Hall, North St, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AG. T1 & T2 Golden Weeping Willow reduce by 30%.	Notification to carry out work to trees in conservation area	Support
09/00184/TC (DEL)	Townland Farmhouse, 32 North St, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AS. T1- Weeping Willow reduce by 30%. T2 – Oak reduce by 25%. T3 – Walnut – reduce by 30%. T4 – Bay	Notification to carry out work to trees in conservation area	Support

		tree – reduce by 25-30%. T5 – Weeping Willow & T6 – Oak – reduce to previous pruning point		
3.	09/01235/AS	The New Mockbeggars, Mockbeggar Lane, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 4BD. Erection of garage	Full Planning Permission	Support
4.	09/01331/AS	Woodlands Caravan Park, Tenterden Rd Biddenden Kent, TN27 8BT Partial reorganisation of existing caravan site to allow static holiday caravans on part of the existing touring caravan area – revised scheme to previous application 05/00336/AS	Full Planning Permission	Site Visit
5.	09/01294/AS	Woodlands Caravan Park, Tenterden Rd, Biddenden, Kent, TN27 8BT. Erection of office/reception/shop building (amendment to 03/00634/AS) – retrospective	Full Planning Permission	Site Visit
6.	09/01303/AS	The Dye House, North Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AG. To open blocked fireplace and install wood burning stove and cowl to chimney.	Listed Building Consent	Support
7.	09/01008/AS	Washenden Manor, High Halden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DA. Erection of stables.	Full Planning Permission	Support
8.	09/01380/AS	Spill Land Caravan Park, Benenden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent TN27 8BX. Replacement of existing site managers caravan and garage with a brick and mortar dwelling.	Full Planning Permission	Site Visit
9.	09/01346/AS	The Mews, Tenterden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DN. Extension to existing garage – retrospective.	Full Planning Permission	Support
10	09/01426/AS	The Weavers House, 11 High St, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AL. Erection of a first floor dormer window with a pitched roof to match existing style at the east and west end of the terrace to rear elevation.	Listed Building Consent	Support
11.	09/01433/AS	Orchardene, Frittenden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LF. Demolition of existing conservatory and erection of new single story rear extension, extension to attic to create bedroom, ensuite bathroom and dressing room including erection of two new dormer windows and balcony. Erection of new dormer window to front elevation.	Full Planning Permission	Support

12.	09/01434/AS	Roberts Farm, Smarden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ. Proposed demolition of 5 existing outhouses and replacement with new garage/swimming pool building and home office/garden store.	Full Planning Permission	Support
	Application No.	Location and Description	Application Type	Decision
13	09/01436/AS	Roberts Farm, Smarden Rd, Biddenden, Ashford, TN27 8QJ. Demolition of rear conservatory and replacement with erection of kitchen/breakfast area extension, erection of wagon porch to front elevation to create extended hall and first floor bathroom, new ground floor windows to rear elevation, demolition of rear porch and replacement with window and erection of new rear porch and back door.	Full Planning Permission	Support

The Clerk reported that the decision date for the application on 30 High Street was 13 January. The Clerk was asked to ask Cllr Bell if he had any additional information on this application.

It was noted that approval had been given by ABC to Bloomsburys for their illuminated sign. The Clerk was asked to write to Bloomsburys to request them to consider putting hoods around the lights on the ground to reduce the potential distraction to motorists.

18. Correspondence

The correspondence schedule had been circulated to Councillors in advance of the meeting. Therefore, the "Action" section only was read out and considered.

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| 17 November | Grounds maintenance contract 2010. This had been dealt with under Group Reports. |
| 19 November | Letter from Mrs Dowsey re Allotments (copied to Cllrs Richards & Lupton. This letter had been dealt with under Allotments. The Clerk was asked to reply. |
| 26 November | Email from Jennifer Shaw (ABC) re Older Persons Survey template document. They want the PC to distribute the questionnaire to everyone over 50 who is not an ABC tenant via local groups, local knowledge of where people live. It was suggested that questionnaires be left in Turners |

and the Post Office as it would not be possible to identify every home with residents aged over 50 in them.

13 November KCC re Millennium Field and Explore Kent. The Council decided that advertising the Millennium Field was not necessary as details of it were already on the village website.

The Clerk added that a quotation had been received from Sue Boon of £210 to renovate the noticeboards and she asked whether the Council were happy with this. **It was agreed** that the work should be carried out.

The Chairman stated that the draft letter sent to KALC for advice had now come back and that the letter could now be sent..

19. Items for future consideration

The amount of papers requiring printing for each meeting was brought up and it was suggested that all the papers be copied and sent to Councillors. It was pointed out that the Clerk did print out a great deal but that she still had to go to Cranbrook for copying. It was suggested that the Council look at purchasing a small photocopier. The Clerk was asked to research this.

20. Next Meeting: Parish Council Meeting, Tuesday 12 January 2010 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall.

Alison Swannick, Parish Clerk 01580 890750



12th January 2010.