

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Approved Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on Tuesday 8 February 2011 at 7.30 pm held in the Village Hall, Biddenden

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

Also present: Borough Cllr N Bell
Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

4 Parishioners attended.

1. Apologies for absence

There were no apologies.

2. Parishioners' Questions

Parishioner A requested clarification on the status of the Council's groups. They wished to know if they were bodies of the Council. The Chairman stated that the groups were bodies of the Council but had no powers. They were instructed to consider issues on an advisory basis and report back to the Council in order for any decisions to be made. [REDACTED] continued to ask for clarification. The Chairman asked the parishioner to submit her request to the clerk in writing. (Please see Chairman's apology after Agenda Item 10).

Parishioner B said that there was a possibility of getting local craftsmen in Biddenden together under the banner "Biddenden Made" to sell their products. There was a possibility of using the old Parsons Estate agent's office but it depended upon rent. He wanted to know what the views of the Parish Council were. **It was agreed** that the Parish Council was in support of the concept and asked to be kept updated on the project.

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

Declarations of interest in agenda items were received as follows:

Cllr Mrs E Cansdale Doctors Surgery. Cllr Cansdale has a Prejudicial interest as she is employed by the surgery.

Cllr M Conway Doctors Surgery due to the locality of his home.

Cllr T Lupton His property is mentioned in the Planning Schedule

Cllr H Richards Allotments. He is the former tenant of the land.

4. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

Cllr Lupton had completed a new form detailing a change and this had been given to the Clerk to send to ABC.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2011

The Clerk had circulated details of a change to the minutes. There being no further comments or additions, the minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record. Proposed by: Cllr M Conway Seconded by: Cllr Mrs E Cansdale.

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

There were no matters for information not on the agenda.

7. Report by Cllr Bell, Ashford Borough Council

Cllr Bell gave his support to the “Biddenden Made” concept and stated that he would be in touch with Parishioner B.

The planning application for development in Sandeman Way had gone before the Planning Committee. A decision had been deferred on the basis that officers were to be sent away to contact the developer about reducing the number of houses. Since then, two or three more documents have appeared on the website suggesting the design had changed. He urged BPC to look at the site and stated that it might be helpful if this was picked up by the Parish Council. Discussion took place regarding planning permission for the land and the possibility of an alleyway being part of the design.

Cllr Bell outlined the extended roll out of Ashford’s blue box recycling scheme to neighbouring villages and mentioned that Biddenden might be included in a future roll out. He asked if he could arrange a presentation by ABC at a village meeting prior to the Parish Council on 12 April. The Chairman responded that the Council would discuss this later in the meeting.

Questions were put to Cllr Bell regarding the blue box scheme and recycling. Cllr Bell stated that the blue box scheme would affect the recycling payments made to Biddenden and that ABC had statutory recycling targets to meet.

8. CCTV

It was noted that Cllr Boulding would be putting a paper together to give to the Information Group and that the group would be considering data management. A report is to be given at the March meeting.

9. High Street Southside Pavement

The Footpath proposals were received by email in January and circulated to all Councillors. Concern had been expressed regarding the proposed crossing on the Village Green and vehicles turning right. Cllr Friend had subsequently submitted a suggested alternative layout to the proposed crossing to KHS.

Cllr Hill met with Kent Highways to discuss the proposals and funding. An email has been received from Cllr Hill (as circulated) together with a revised A4 plan of the scheme.(received on 7 February and circulated for consideration).

The discussion was split into two issues: finance and the work to be carried out.

Financing:

It was noted that Cllr Hill had agreed with KHS that the repair of the Bethersden Marble on the Northside of the High Street would be funded by KCC, and that KHS were not in a position to fund improvement work to pavements.

It was therefore necessary for KCC to request funding for the improvements. These are estimated to cost £31,000. Councillor Hill proposed that the Parish Council contribute £ 15,700 towards, and he is prepared to recommend an additional sum of £15,300 from his Members Highways Grant.

It was agreed that Biddenden Parish Council would use the £5700 grant funding received from Cllr Hill and would make a £10,000 contribution, being the money received from the Old Mill Court development for this purpose, as its contribution towards the cost of the project. A vote was taken and was unanimous.

The Clerk was instructed to inform Cllr Hill of the formal decision to contribute to the Funding.

The work:

Bethersden Marble paving along the South side of the High Street: It was noted that the preferred option by Kent Highways was to in fill between the Bethersden Marble stones to create a more level surface. The issue of the drainage was raised, as was the breaking of the existing kerbstones.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the plans for the crossing at the Village Green and the proposed upgrading of the pavement between the post office and the south end of Hendon Hall.

It was agreed that Cllr Friend should contact Kent Highways to arrange a site visit to discuss the matter further. Approval for the plans still had to be gained from the conservation officers for the plans.

The Chairman stated that item 11 would be taken before item 10.

11. Salt Bins

After driving around the Parish only one bin has been located. A letter has been written to Highways to inform them of the situation and they have been asked if it would be possible to supply at least 2 more bins, although the last time this was requested the council was told they only had 4 for the whole Kent area so the chance of getting another is not hopeful. If the answer is “no” and the Council thinks bins are required then bins can be purchased at approximately £141.75 each. If this is accepted then the next phase would be to find the best place to situate them. The sand bag is currently full and is currently at Pullen Barn Farm.

A report from NALC legal department entitled “Responsibilities for the clearing of snow and ice from Highways” has been distributed to all parishes. Electronic copies are available if required.

Discussion took place about the possible location for salt bins. The Council would have to make an application for the bins as the decision for allocation would be made in the summer. **It was agreed** that an application be made for a salt bin at the bottom of Chulhurst as there had been accidents there. Another possibility was the PO car park. **It was agreed** that Cllr Friend would establish whose responsibility it was to fill and grit from the bins.

Cllr Cansdale left the meeting for item 10.

10. Doctors Surgery

The draft Heads of Terms have been received from Invicta (representing Headcorn Surgery) by MHSB Associates (copy circulated). MHSB will forward their advice to us once they have fully considered the draft.

It was agreed that MHSB would redraft the Heads of Terms and that the Clerk was instructed to send the revised document to the Council's solicitors for comment prior to the next meeting. This was agreed unanimously. Cllr Conway did not vote as he had declared an interest in the matter.

The timescale for development and site plans have been chased up by MHSB.

The Headcorn Practice has refunded the first month's fees from MHSB and a legal bill. There is no invoice for January from MHSB but the estimate for February is £0 - £1000.

Discussion took place regarding the meeting being organised by Cllrs Bell and Daly on 5 March. The parish council had not been involved in the organisation of this meeting..

It was reported that Invicta Chartered Surveyors (representing the Headcorn Practice) and the doctors would be present.

Councillors felt that the meeting would be one sided and could affect the negotiations regarding the lease on the Jubilee Meadow. Cllr Daly was asked by Cllr Richards what his involvement was. Cllr Daly stated that he was a patient at the Headcorn Surgery. The Chairman stated he had been contacted by Cllr Daly and Cllr Bell about the meeting, and had requested it not take place as the Council was still in the process of negotiating the lease of land for the surgery.

A proposal was put forward that a notice be put in the parish magazine stating that the Parish Council was not involved in the meeting as the lease was still under negotiation and it would therefore be inappropriate to attend. Any councillors attending would be doing so in a personal capacity and would not be representing the view of the parish Council. Notices would also be put on the notice boards to this effect. A vote was taken and **the proposal agreed**. 8 in favour; 1 abstention (Cllr Conway had declared an interest in the matter); 1 against (Cllr Daly); Cllr Cansdale was not in the room due to a prejudicial interest.

The Chairman apologised to Parishioner A and to the meeting for his use of inappropriate wording earlier in the meeting, and for misrepresenting the Council. He stated that a lot of effort had gone into trying to get the Parish Council working smoothly and within the rules. To say that was a waste of time was incorrect.

Cllr Richards left the meeting after this item.

A coffee break was taken.

12. Reports by Group Chairmen

Car Park, Toilets and Post Office: The work on the height barrier will take place shortly. It has been delayed due to freezing at night which would affect newly mixed concrete.

The rent has been received for January – March 2011 together with the PO electricity contribution.

The toilets are now being cleaned every day. A plumber has been called out to look at the systemiser in the men's toilet which is constantly running and therefore using excess water.

It was reported that the doors had not been locking properly due to swelling, but it seemed to have rectified itself.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: It was reported that hedge laying is due to take place during the February half term. A working party would be meeting on 5th March.

Traffic and Pedestrians: The situation regarding lowering the height of the curb at the bus stop at Woodlands remains as there is currently no money, but Kent Highways are looking to see if any can be found although they are not hopeful.

The pothole on the High Halden Road has now been filled. A general note has been received from Kent Highways to say that potholes will be filled on the basis of the worst ones will be treated first.

It was reported that there was a pothole in the pavement in The Meadows.

If Parishioners report areas of roads that are breaking up please let Cllr Friend know and he will investigate and pass on the information to Highways.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: A meeting was held on 1 February regarding the water supply with a representative from South East Water due to the high bill on this meter. The location of the GJ playing field meter was confirmed. It was confirmed that the Council is supplying water to the Bowls Club and confirmation is awaited from the Squash Club about their water. Once this is established next steps will need to be decided.

The Grounds maintenance schedule for 2011 has been received from KCC Landscape Services. The prices have increased by 3%. **It was agreed** that the Clerk should accept the quotation, but amend the section regarding the Village Green as KCC Landscape Services do not look after it.

Squash Court embankment fencing: A quotation and plan was circulated at the meeting. However the proposal only attempts to address the problem at one end of the embankment, when the whole of the embankment is affected. **It was agreed** that a meeting be arranged between Cllrs Ruse, Conway and Richards to discuss the matter further and a report be given at the March meeting.

Police Liaison: A meeting has not been held since Sgt McNeil moved on some months ago. The Chief Constable has apologised and guaranteed that a meeting will take place in two months time.

KALC and Parish Forum: Papers were circulated to councillors and Cllr Conway talked through the papers.

Youth: The youth club meets on the third Tuesday of the month in the New Hall.

Housing: It was reported that the next Ashford Rural Older Persons Accommodation Project would take place on 14 February. Cllr Cansdale was unable to attend. However, Cllr Daly offered to attend in her place.

The work on the development in Cheeslands is due to start the week commencing 14 February.

Recycling: Applications have been invited to the Recycling Fund and the clerk has been asked to put up notices and let village organisations know.

Cllr Bell had asked if a presentation on the blue box recycling scheme could take place prior the April parish council meeting. **It was agreed** that it could take place at 7pm on 12 April. The clerk was asked to confirm the Council's agreement to Cllr Bell.

Information: (Cllr Cansdale left the room). A paper had been circulated containing the advice from NALC regarding the disposal of part of the Jubilee Meadow for the purposes of a doctors surgery, together with the wording for a proposal from the Information Group. It was reported that NALC could see no reason why the land could not be used for this purpose, and that if challenged it would be tested against the "Wednesbury principle"..

On this basis, it was proposed that:

Following an internal review by the Parish Council Information Group, receipt of advice from the Council's solicitor and KALC as advised by the Audit Commission, the District Auditor and Ashford Borough Council Director of Community Engagement, and having referred the complete file of papers for review by NALC, it is agreed that there is no encumbrance on the Parish Council disposing of part of the Jubilee Meadow for a Doctors Surgery by way of a lease agreement.

This was agreed by all Councillors eligible to vote. Cllr Conway abstained due to his declared interest in the Surgery.

Proposed by: Cllr C Daly

Seconded by: Cllr C Friend

Councillor Cansdale rejoined the meeting.

Webmaster: Up to date.

Village Hall Management Committee: No report was given in Cllr Richards' absence.

Play Area Improvement: It was reported that good progress has been made with developing plans for the improvement of the play area.

A meeting had taken place with Komplan regarding provision of play equipment. A quotation for four pieces of equipment had been given for £29,000. Komplan will use this as the basis to see if it can source grants to assist with the project (a free service). The Council has made no commitment to Komplan.

A grant application has been submitted to the Big Lottery Fund for the cost of an 800m track on the Gordon Jones Playing Field and other improvements.. It will be a multi purpose track designed for wheelchair users, cyclists, mothers with prams, the elderly.

The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge fund had also been approached. However, this would involve renaming part of the field if the application were successful. The Jubilee Committee would be informed of this application.

It was suggested that in due course the Council consider approving a level of contribution to the playground improvements, so that this could be included in grant applications.

Ashford Borough Council is running a Community Play Workshop. Cllr Conway is unable to attend but Cllr Lupton agreed to attend. Cllr Daly stated that he was also available.

Jubilee Celebrations: The first meeting of the Jubilee Committee is to be held on 17 February.

13. Finance

The payment schedule was presented and agreed. Proposed by: Cllr H Ruse and Seconded by Cllr K Masters.

The Clerk reported that the accounts were now reconciled and up to date using the new Scribe accounts package (circulated). The Clerk was thanked for her hard work.

14. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled

Councillor Masters declared an interest in the application for Castweazle Manor as he was a close friend of the neighbour.

Case No and Committee	Location and Description	Decision
11/00038/AS	Castweazle Manor, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8EW Proposed change of use of part paddock to residential & installation of tennis court with 2.75m high black UPVC coated chain link fencing	Support
11/00077/AS	Chestnuts, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BH Proposed extension to form first floor accommodation and alterations to existing elevations including erection of a balcony	Support
11/00032/AS	6 High Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AH To remove internal wall between No 6 flying freehold on 1st floor and No 10.	Support
Street Name Proposal	Woodlands Park, Tenterden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BT. Proposal for Street Naming: New lodge development requiring new road name. The proposed Street Name is: Woodlands Lodge Park, Biddenden	Support

15. Correspondence

The correspondence list was presented.

The Clerk had been requested to find out fee structures of several solicitors for comparative purposes only. The findings had been circulated. **It was agreed** to continue with the Council's solicitors but to revisit the exercise in the future.

The email from a mobile fish and chip provider was discussed. The Clerk was asked to respond that this was not something that the Parish Council normally commented upon.

16. Items for future consideration

- a) Business continuity plan
- b) Clerks salary review

17. Date of next meeting: Parish Council meeting 7.30 pm Tuesday 8 March
2011 in the Village Hall

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm

Alison Swannick 01580 890750
Parish Clerk