

BIDDENDEN PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday 12 April 2011 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall, Biddenden

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

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)
Borough Councillor Neil Bell

8 parishioners attended.

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies or absence were received from Cllr A Barfoot and Cllr M Conway. The Clerk reported that Cllr Conway had tendered his resignation. However, as an election was taking place he was unable to do so but that his resignation would take effect from 6 May. Cllr Conway's apologies were therefore sent for this meeting.

2. Parishioners' Questions

Parishioner A quoted directly from a letter that the Clerk wrote to them dated 8 April and despite the Council's assurances to the contrary believed the Council to be vilifying and bullying them. The parishioner stated that the Council was in breach of its own Data Protection Procedure and also the Data Protection Act.

Parishioner B stated that he was seriously worried about democracy in the village. Two years ago the village voted to have a surgery and two years later they still have not got it. He stated that few knew the views held by councillors.

Parishioner C thanked the Council on behalf of the Biddenden Allotment Association for organising the allotments. Allotment holders had been allowed onto the allotments two weeks early and a lot of digging had taken place.

Parishioner D was concerned about the Council's standing and what could be done to improve the standing of the Council and make people want to stand for council. The Chairman stated that over the past four years huge attempts had been made to improve regulations, processes and procedures, but that there was still work to be done. He was saddened that people had not put themselves

forward. This had not been helped by the difficulties surrounding the Post Office project and now the Doctors Surgery and he outlined the timeline of events on this.

Parishioner A asked to make a further point. Parishioner A stated that the Council had named them in the February minutes and asked for an explanation. The Clerk stated that the mention of the parishioners name had been a clerical error and that no harm was meant. The Clerk said that she had removed the first mention of the name and had missed the second and apologised unreservedly. The parishioner stated that if it was a clerical error then they were prepared to let it go. The Chairman stated that the Clerk had put that amendment onto the amendment sheet to councillors and so the minutes had been agreed with the amendment by the Council. He asked the parishioner if they accepted the Clerk's apology and Parishioner A declined to accept the Clerk's apology.

Parishioner E congratulated the Council on the layering of the hedge, but said that it was a shame that it would have to be broken up for a gate to the proposed surgery. The Chairman explained the work was being funded by Natural England through the Countryside Stewardship Scheme.

There were no further questions.

3. Any Declarations of Interest in items on the agenda

Declarations of interest in items on the agenda were received from:

Cllr H Richards	His planning application was to be considered
Cllr Mrs E Cansdale	Prejudicial Interest in the Drs Surgery as she is an Employee.

4. Any changes to the Register of Members Interests

There were no changes to the Register of Members Interests.

5. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2011 and the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 30 March 2011

The Clerk read out the amendments made to the minutes of 8 March 2011. There being no further comments, the minutes were considered to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend Seconded by: Cllr V Evason. A vote was taken and **agreed unanimously**.

The Clerk read out the amendments made to the minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting held on 30 March 2011. There being no further comments, the minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr H Ruse and Seconded by: Cllr C Daly. A vote was taken and the minutes were

agreed. Cllr Cansdale did not vote because she did not attend the meeting due to her prejudicial interest.

Cllr Richards asked if amendments could be sent out earlier than currently distributed. The Clerk replied that normally they were, but due to the large number of papers for this meeting it had not been possible to do this.

Cllr Richards asked if councillors could email their alterations to all councillors rather than just the Clerk so everyone could see them. The Chairman asked councillors if they would like this to happen, but councillors were happy for the current system to stay in place and an amendment sheet to be produced.

6. Matters for information not on the agenda

There were no matters for information.

7. Report by Cllr Bell, Ashford Borough Council

Cllr Bell apologized that the Blue Box recycling presentation had been cancelled but this had been at the request of the officers concerned as it could be thought controversial during an election period. It would be rearranged after the election. He outlined the scheme and said that if Biddenden were considered eligible for the scheme it may affect the Recycling Credits received by the parish council.

Cllr Cansdale asked if wheelie bins would be issued to villagers as some families were putting 12-14 black sacks out. Cllr Bell stated that there were currently no plans to do so.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Bell.

8. CCTV

A paper had been circulated. However, Cllr Boulding proposed looking at the siting of the cameras as the police had said that putting cameras under the eaves by the toilets would not be a good idea. He would come back with the paper at a later date.

Cllr Richards asked if the paper would deal with how CCTV would affect the Council and who would administer the system. It was understood that the Information Group would deal with the issue. However, the chair of the Information Group said that there were no concerns relating to how the system was administered.

9. High Street Southside Pavement

No further news had been received from Highways but a note has been sent asking for an update. However a survey team from Jacobs has been carrying out survey works to the areas covered by the works. A letter confirming BPC's contribution towards the work has been sent to Kent Highways upon request. It was reported that an email had been received this morning saying that a topographical survey has been done and that Highways would now be dealing with the design for the scheme and a first draft was due in May.

10. Doctors Surgery

Cllr Mrs Cansdale left the meeting.

An Extraordinary Meeting was held on 30 March and Heads of Terms agreed. A letter was sent to Invicta chartered surveyors in reply to their letter to the Chairman. A press release was issued, and the agreed Heads of Terms were sent to the Council's solicitor to send to the Doctors solicitor together with the email from John Spence, which he has amended to get the field names correct.

A letter has been received from a relative of Gordon Jones regarding access and this has been forwarded to the Council's solicitors who are advising the Council on these issues.

The invoice for February/March was submitted to the Headcorn Practice for reimbursement but they have requested a more detailed breakdown. A copy of the email from the Headcorn practice had been circulated.

A letter had been sent by Invicta to MHSB late last Friday and a copy circulated to all councillors. The Clerk had requested MHSB to give their considered opinion but this had not been ready in time for the meeting.

Concern was expressed about the content of the Invicta letter and the fact that if parishioners knew what the council was having to deal with they might be more sympathetic. If there is an expectation that the car park is tarmacked costs of approximately £50,000 may be incurred.

The email from Natural England was noted. Advice would need to be sought on this issue.

Cllr Cansdale rejoined the meeting.

11. Date of Annual Parish Meeting

It was reported that the proposed date of 26 April was in the middle of the election process and would need to be moved. It had to take place by the end of

May and it was, therefore, proposed that the Annual Parish Meeting take place on 10 May before the Annual Statutory meeting. **This was agreed.**

12. Reports by Group Chairmen

Car park, Toilets and Post Office: The lock on the ladies toilet door is broken and not locking – the locksmith has been asked to fix this. There has also been a problem with both the ladies and men’s toilets flooding and arrangements for the drains to be cleared have been made. Quotations are being sought for metal doors.

A letter has been received ABC regarding a Fire Risk Assessment for the toilets and offering the free services of a building control surveyor. This will be organised.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: A formal proposal is made to the parish council to move the beacon from its current position to the car park on the verge near the post office. It would be a ¾ height and planted with trailing flowers so that it could be enjoyed all year round. Concerns were expressed about lighting it. Agreement was given in principle and the Clerk was asked to check with the ABC Planning Department as to whether planning permission is required to re-site it.

It was noted that the village sign is looking shabby.

Traffic and Pedestrians:

- a) Works to the new bus stop outside Woodlands has been completed and feedback from residents has been positive.
- b) Posts have been installed to one side of the green at Woodlands and this seems to have stopped parking. However if parking persists then further posts may be required but these may have to be paid for by the parish.
- c) As a new financial year has commenced, Parish Councils have been asked by Kent Highways for a list of works that require or desired to be carried out. A list should be on a priority basis so if Councillors can offer some suggestions these would be appreciated. The potholes on High Halden Road were discussed.

Sand bins: No further word.

Gordon Jones Playing Field: Tenterden Tigers will be holding their tournament on 11 and 12 June. They have requested that the Council cut the grass twice prior to the event. An email has been sent advising that they will be responsible for any non-routine mowing.

Details have been received of engineers to contact regarding the squash club embankment and quotations are being sought.

Following confirmation from VHMC that they are currently not paying for metered water, only drainage, a letter will be sent to VHMC to follow this up.

Police Liaison: Nothing to report.

KALC and Parish Forum: Nothing to report.

Youth: The Biddenden youth club is steady, the numbers being between 10 and 18 per meeting at the moment.

Now the change of bank details has been effected the club can pay for insurance so it can affiliate with "Kent Youth" and be able to join in their wider group of activities which will hopefully entice more in.

Housing: Nothing to report.

Recycling: The minutes of the meeting held on 6 April had been circulated. The Recycling Group recommended the following donations from the Recycling Fund:

Biddenden Lawn Tennis Club	£250
Biddenden Squash Club	£200
Biddenden Bowls Club	£200
The Jollies	£250
Friends of John Mayne School	£250
Biddenden Horticultural Society (sponsorship of Harvest competition)	£100

The request of Biddenden Junior Football Club has been denied because a donation was made in the first half of 2010/2011 and it had been agreed to only accept one application per group per financial year.

Proposed by: Cllr C Daly Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding
It was **unanimously agreed** to make the above donations.

A balance of £ 506.22 remains from the 2009/10 Recycling funds. This is being retained for possible costs of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations in 2012.

Information: The Clerk reported that she proposed to draw up a form for people to fill in when requesting information under the Freedom of Information Act. This would make it clear what was being requested. A copy could be put on the website. **It was agreed** that the Clerk draw up a form.

Webmaster: Up to date.

Village Hall Management Committee: The VHMC AGM is to be held on 19 May.

Allotments: The water supply has now been connected. All agreements have been returned to allotment holders and they are now working on their plots.

It was suggested that a numbered padlock be put on the gate as an NFU mailing had warned members to secure gates.

Play Area: The Big Lottery Fund have rejected the council's application. The Queen Elizabeth fund is interested in pursuing the funding application.

Jubilee Celebrations: A meeting is to be held on 21 April.

13. Finance

The Schedule of Payments was presented to the Council. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend and Seconded by: Cllr K Masters. **It was agreed unanimously** to make the listed payments.

It was noted that the Audit Commission had now sent the Annual Return forms out and the timetable was noted.

14. Planning

The Parish Council considered the following applications:

Cllr Richards left the room whilst his application was being discussed.

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
11/00266/AS	Biddenden	Stede Quarter Farm, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JG Erection of a conservatory	Support
11/00267/AS	Biddenden	Stede Quarter Farm, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JG Erection of a conservatory and enclose a porch	Support
11/00308/AS	Biddenden	Fredith Farm, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BJ Erection of general purpose agricultural building to replace existing building	Support
11/00272/AS	Biddenden	Frogs Hole Oast, Sissinghurst Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8HB Removal of two posts in living room	Support
11/00321/AS	Biddenden	Chestnut Stables, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Kent Lounge / Study Extension	Support
11/00290/AS	Biddenden	Three Chimneys Stud, Hareplain Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LW	Site Visit

		Change of use of land to site a mobile home (static) & touring caravan.	
11/00286/AS	Biddenden	Low Poles Farm, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8ER Alterations to and change of use of redundant barn to additional living accommodation in association with existing dwelling	Support
11/00351/AS	Biddenden	Pullen Barn Farm, Headcorn Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JA Installation of 591 Sharp NU245wp Solar PV panels on existing barn 1 roof and 2 lean-to roofs. Installation of 90 Sharp NU245wp Solar PV panels on existing barn 2 roof	Support

15. Correspondence

The Chairman asked that the list of correspondence **not** requiring action be considered first. The Clerk was asked to write to Tenterden Tigers and the Biddenden Football Clubs asking that they clear up after matches as users of the field had been picking up litter following use of the field.

There being no further comment the Chairman moved onto correspondence requiring action. The following were considered:

6 April Letter from Parishioner in response to Clerks letter of 5 April (circulated to councillors)

31 March Letter from Parishioner re minutes (circulated to Councillors) and reply from Clerk dated 8 April 2011. Clerks reply of 8 April circulated.

A subsequent email had been received from a parishioner dated 9 April in response to the Clerk's letter of 8 April. This had been circulated.

In relation to the email received on 9 April which linked in to the issues contained in the parishioner's letter of 31 March and subsequent correspondence, the Clerk had taken advice from the Information Commissioner's Office, and read out the advice to the meeting. Since the parishioner was not happy with the information supplied the request should be sent for Internal Review.

In respect of the letter from a parishioner dated 6 April, this also expressed dissatisfaction at the information supplied, this letter too was a complaint and should be sent for Internal Review as this action would comply with the advice

given by the ICO.

This proposal was Proposed by: Cllr C Daly and Seconded by: Cllr D Boulding. A vote was taken and there was one abstention. **The motion was carried.**

The Clerk was asked if she had any further advice that she would like to read out or would she prefer to provide it for the Internal Review. The Clerk said that she would pass the advice on for Internal Review.

16. Items for future consideration

- a) The co-option of future councillors as there were four vacancies. The Clerk had requested information from ABC.
- b) Cllr Ruse gave his apologies for the Annual Parish Meeting
- c) On 10 May, Review the standard agenda and appoint people into the structures agreed at that meeting

The Chairman thanked all councillors for their efforts, naming Cllr Barfoot as he was not present.

The Chairman also thanked the Clerk for her support and hard work, sometimes in very trying conditions.

- 18. Date of Next meeting:** Annual Parish Meeting 10 May at 6.45 pm
Annual Statutory Meeting 10 May at 7.30 pm

Both meeting will be held in the Village Hall
All Welcome

The meeting entered closed session at 9.15 pm.

17. Presentation of a formal complaint (closed session)

The Chairman closed the meeting and asked all members of the public, press and media to leave.

The Chairman left the meeting and the meeting proposed that Cllr Masters take the chair. Proposed by: Cllr Ruse and Seconded by Cllr Evason. **Agreed unanimously.**

There was a hearing of a formal complaint by a parishioner, in accordance with the Complaints Policy. **It was agreed** that a formal apology through the Clerk be made to the complainant on behalf of the Parish Council for revealing their name as the author of a letter during the Parish Council meeting on 11th January 2011, and that the Chairman be requested to confirm an apology, in writing.

The meeting closed at 10.00 pm.

Alison Swannick
Parish Clerk

Tel: 01580 890750