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Biddenden Parish Council

UNAPPROVED Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Tuesday 5 December 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Old Village Hall, Biddenden

Present: Cllr C Friend (Chair)
Cllr D Boulding
Cllr E Cansdale
Cllr A Lidgett

Cllr S Parks
Cllr J Tydeman
Cllr R Wayre

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

Cllr M Hill OBE, KCC County Councillor
Cllr N Bell, ABC Borough Councillor

Approximately 10 parishioners attended.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr M Hill and Cllr N Bell to the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr E Stevenson-Rouse due to personal commitments
Cllr T Bizley due to work commitments
Cllr P Harris due to illness

2. Parishioners' Questions

A question was asked about the proposed cuts in bus services. Cllr Hill stated that there was a lot of misinformation and that the information put out was unhelpful in terms of a press release with no clear explanation of what the intentions were. He apologised for this.

KCC is looking to make savings on some bus subsidies due to empty buses running and it costing up to £15 per passenger to run them.

A list of routes was put out detailing route subsidies to possibly be cut NOT buses to be cut. KCC does not have anything to do with buses and routes as that is the domain of the bus companies/operators.

A consultation is to be undertaken and KCC want to hear views on improvements to routes or any other areas. The consultation starts in mid-January until March and KCC will see what the results are before deciding what it will do.

KCC is talking severely to the operators to ensure that KCC is getting everything it wants from the operators. If some operators take away services, then KCC will look at what can be done in terms of community transport. There are a number of options in terms of small mini buses and taxis. There are lots of possibilities which may involve the community.

A question was asked about the cutting of the 12RC service to Headcorn station. Cllr Hill stated that the operator withdrew the service.

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A question was asked about the timescale for getting options out. Cllr Hill stated that the consultation would run from mid-January until March and work on options was going on now. The pressures on budgets is horrendous as councils did not get anything in the Government budget and it is hoped there will be something from local government settlements. There has been a large cut in the budget over the last eight years – a real reduction in cash terms from Government, but other pressures have had to be absorbed. The Leader of KCC has gone to great lengths to make the Government aware of this.

A question was asked about the train timetabling. Cllr Bell stated that he had heard that they were not expecting changes to rail services, but that he would check this. It is all leading up to appointing a new franchise, and potential franchisees are being asked to bid based on the present services. The message is that a reduction is not expected. Damian Green MP has said that he is not expecting them to be reduced.

3. Any declarations of interest in items on the Agenda

None.

4. Any alterations to Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None.

5. Approval of the unapproved minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2017

There were no amendments to or comments on the minutes. The minutes were therefore deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr R Wayre
Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Unanimous.**

6. Any matters for information not on the agenda

The Parish Council thanked Jo Smith and her husband Graham, and all those who made poppies or helped to organise the lovely displays in support of Remembrance Day.

An email was received from ABC stating that the investigation into 30 High Street had been closed as despite asking three times for the owners to apply for retrospective change of use from a retail unit they hadn't complied, and the enforcement officer believed that no harm was being done. An email was written back stating how disappointed the council was as it had informed ABC several times of the property being used as a residence. It had also been marketed for sale as such and now appeared to be sold. A reply is awaited. Cllr Bell agreed to chase this up.

7. Report by Borough Councillor, ABC

Cllr Bell reported that there were two prongs of attack by Gladman: the planning application and Gladman trying to get the site put into the local plan. The Draft Local Plan is going to the Borough Council cabinet in December and will then go to the full council the following week, thereby strengthening the plan. If this is passed it is expected that the Local Plan will be put out for public examination in the Spring.

The original decision for a decision on the Gladman planning application is expected in

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January. However, KCC Ecology requested information on Great Crested Newts and why a breeding birds survey had not been carried out. It was suggested that the council write to the Biological Records Office and ask for a report of what is there already.

Junction 10A on the M20 has now been announced. It will have an effect on Biddenden as it means a number of developments to the east of Ashford will be possible: some commercial and some retail, but it will mean more development around Ashford itself rather than outside it.

Lorry Park: ABC has put restrictions on the laybys in Charing. They are clamping lorries not using the park. They can see if there are spaces in the lorry park and drivers are told. If they don't move they are then clamped. The hunt is now on for another lorry park site. A question was asked about what happens if moving on pushes them over their driving hours. The answer is that it doesn't break UK regulations, but it may break EU regulation and drivers will be dealt with when they are back in Europe.

Ashford Borough Council has been put forward for Council of the Year and Entrepreneurial Council of the UK for the UK by the Local Government Association (LGA), and has since been shortlisted. Regarding the Entrepreneurial element of it, ABC has had its money reduced but has been fortunate to be investing in local commercial property. This is replacing lost revenue from Government, which helps to keep the council tax down. ABC is buying new houses on new housing estates and is renting them out at market value. Revenue is for the general fund to support council tax etc.

8. Ashford Borough Council Local Plan to 2030 - Site submissions for Biddenden

a) Update: Ashford KALC have been writing to Simon Cole regarding the local plan and copies of the correspondence has been circulated.

b) Land to the East of North Street: A Tree Preservation Order has been issued on the site detailing over 40 trees, hedges etc to be preserved.

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9. Telecommunications Mast

Four councillors requested that this issue be revisited as they did not believe that all options for sites had been fully discussed or that they had seen all documents (see document attached to the minutes)

Councillors were asked to consider the Telecommunications Mast document enclosed with the papers, which contained all documents previously circulated to councillors plus more recent documents relating to the project which were due to be circulated at this meeting.

Discussion took place regarding the current siting of the mast and other options which had been dismissed. The view expressed that the parish council was “bounced” into the site by Shared Access was discussed, but it was pointed out that the council had given Shared Access siting suggestions and asked for those that they suggested which were deemed unsuitable to be moved.

The issue of using the church tower was discussed.

It was reported that following the last meeting the clerk had asked Shared Access on behalf of councillors to increase their offer from £25,000 for 30 years to a fee of £30000 for a 30 year term for the siting of the mast. Shared Access had agreed to this. Clarity was also provided regarding the fact that it would be full 4G and the situation regarding using the church tower as a site.

A secondary issue raised was that project documents should be stored electronically in a document repository which allowed councillors electronic access, for example like Drop Box.

The issue of electronic access to papers was discussed. It had been previously discussed and dismissed following advice from KALC previously. However, times and technology had changed, and this could be revisited. The Clerk was asked to contact KALC re guidance and it was **agreed** that this issue should be put on the agenda for the February meeting.

The Chairman took a second vote on the parish council agreeing to the siting of the telecommunications mast on the Gordon Jones playing field (the first vote was held on 7 November 2017) by a show of hands as to whether councillors were happy to proceed with the project as it currently stood. For: 5 Against: 2 **Agreed**.

10. KCC Voluntary Support Wardens

Councillors are asked to consider the scheme to see if it might be of interest to Biddenden. Cllr Hill stated that there had been a reduction in Community Wardens from 100 down to 70. A back-up is sort and so the Voluntary Support Warden (VSW) scheme was launched. There are currently 7 wards looking at the scheme and trying to take it up. Only a small investment is required. Wardens provide advice and assistance and help the police and the community as a source of information. It is an ideal job for a volunteer. The annual cost is approximately £600. 24 parishes are currently interested in the scheme. The Clerk was asked to look into the scheme further.

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11. Meeting Dates 2018

The meeting dates for 2018 were **agreed**.

12. Reports from Group Chairmen:

PO, Car park and toilets: There has been flooding in the toilets, the electric water heater has broken and the urinal and wash basin in the men's toilet required complete flushing to clear the blockage to the pipes. This was not due to vandalism.

The Clerk has alerted the police to criminal damage to the toilets by youths who have been throwing curry at the doors. Images have been captured but they are not clear enough to make identifications. The PCSO has been in contact to say that he is aware and has been checking the area and around the village.

Car parking in the car park is still an issue. At 0900 it is full which has the effect of turning people away from the village.

Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow: A contractor has been asked to quote for repairs to the three bridges crossing the stream in the Millennium Field wood.

Michael Palmer has been asked to cut the hedges in the Millennium Field and the back of the GJ Playing Field.

Strimming around the memorial trees will shortly take place.

Tree surgeons have been asked to quote to pollard the trees in the lower dipping pond and also for the trees within the squash club embankment.

Traffic, Pedestrians and Footpaths: A quotation has now been received for replacing the small noticeboard on the wall of the village store at a cost of £2,574.60. The quote came from the same firm who did the renovation of the large noticeboard. Another quotation will be sought for a ready-made board.

Lychgate: A meeting will take place on 6/12 at 0900 with a Highways Drainage Engineer to discuss the flooding around the lychgate further.

Gordon Jones Field and Play Area: A quotation for the clearing of the area within the squash club embankment fence is awaited.

Remedial works to the play area have been chased and a contractor asked to quote for additional fencing. Cllr Parks agreed to contact Lars Laj as some of the works may fall within the warranty.

13. Police Liaison: Police UK shows 14 crimes reported in September 2017:

Anti-social Behaviour	3
Burglary	2
Criminal Damage & Arson	1
Other Theft	4

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Public Order	1
Vehicle Crime	3

KALC and Parish Forum: The Clerk will book a place at a workshop on the new General Data Protection Regulations in January. Cllrs Lidgett and Wayre will be attending the Crime & Safety Conference on 7/12/17.

Planning and Housing: The Option agreement between Southern Housing and VHSC has not yet been signed, but once it has the Charity Commission will be approached for approval.

Community Project Fund: To-date only one application has been received. It was **agreed** that the Chairman would contact members of the Community Project Fund group for their views.

Allotments: Awaiting details regarding the beekeeping and new tenancy agreement wording.

Village Hall Management Committee:

The room in the New Village Hall previously used by the Drs Surgery would seem to be available as the Drs wish to use the facilities. It has been suggested that this be reallocated as a Parish Council Records office with Records stored in suitable fireproof cabinets. This was **agreed** and the Chairman would have further talks with VHSC.

The next meeting is 6 December 2017.

Health and Safety: A report was circulated.

John Mayne School: The newsletter was circulated.

14. Finance

- a) **Payment of cheques:** The list was circulated. Proposed by: Cllr J Tydeman Seconded by: Cllr A Lidgett. **Agreed.** There were three abstentions regarding the parish magazine payment as it was above the agreed sum. The Clerk was asked to check if this increased figure was temporary or permanent.
- b) **Note accounts to 1 December 2017** – Statements not yet available and the accounts would be circulated separately.

15. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled:

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
17/01548/AS	Biddenden	Whitfield House, High Halden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BZ Proposed rear extension and porch; proposed external works to paving and landscaping; proposed garage and ancillary building; changes to fenestration; proposed swimming pool and tennis court; change of use of land to residential.	Support

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Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
17/01576/AS	Biddenden	Biddenden Place, Tenterden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8BB New windows on first floor side elevation; replacement rooflights; new external door to south elevation with tiled canopy roof; replacement vehicular access gates, pedestrian gate and field gate; erection of shepherd's hut	Support
17/01703/AS	Biddenden	Agricultural building, Seal Oast, Cranbrook Road, Biddenden, Kent Prior approval for associated operational development in accordance with prior approval 15/01253/AS (Prior Approval for a change of use of an agricultural building including land within its curtilage into a single residential dwelling)	Support
17/01767/AS	Biddenden	East Ongley Farm, Ongley Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8HF Change of use of land from agricultural to residential. Erection of a double garage and apron and a garden shed/woodstore.	Support
17/01697/AS	Biddenden	Gorse Farm, Pook Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JJ Proposed replacement cesspit with 2no. sewage treatment plants.	Support
17/01709/AS	Biddenden	Barn at, Guy House, River Hall Lane, Biddenden, Kent Conversion of redundant tractor shed and animal barn into a residential dwelling including increase in roof height and link between shed and barn, new double garage, timber gates on brick piers	Support

13. Correspondence

There were no comments or requests for copies of correspondence on the list.

14. Items for future consideration

Budget to be considered at the meeting on 2/1/18

Voluntary Support Wardens

Project documentation storage on 6/2/18

15. Staffing - Taken in closed session

It was **agreed** to increase the cleaner's hourly rate to the same as the holiday cover contractor used by the council.

16. Next meeting: Parish Council Meeting, Tuesday 2 January 2018 at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

From: Richard Wayre <r.wayre@icloud.com>
Sent: 27 November 2017 11:36
To: clerk@biddenden.gov.uk
Cc: philippaaharris@aol.com; scott.parks@allendadswell.co.uk; Tim Bizley; chris friend
Subject: BPS Decision - Nov 2017 - Site of New Mobile Telco Mast

Dear Alison

We refer to the decision taken during the meeting of Biddenden Parish Council [on 7th November, 2017](#) regarding the siting of a new mobile telecommunications mast on the Gordon Jones recreation ground.

As you will recall, prior to the vote, there was some debate of the completeness of assessments of other potential sites; the church tower was raised as one such example. Subsequent to the vote it has become clear that this site, at least, was never properly examined as a possible location for the new mast despite councillors believing it had been.

On the basis that, therefore, the decision was taken without complete or entirely accurate information being available, and under the terms of Standing Order 7 from BPCs Standing Orders, we, Councillors Bizley, Harris, Parks and myself, request that this decision is returned to council for proper review and a second vote.

We would ask that, for this second discussion, all documentation relating to this project is provided in advance to councillors describing each and every site that has been considered as a potential location for the new mast. It would also be useful to understand the criteria against which they were assessed, including the environmental, cultural and aesthetic factors as well as the technical benefits and limitations of each site.

We would reiterate that we are not trying to obstruct the improvement of communication systems for the village which clearly benefit many, but we do believe it important that BPC is seen to make considered, objective decisions based on clear evidence, especially for projects such as this which are likely to polarise opinions of parishioners.

Kind regards

Richard Wayre

Tim Bizley

Philippa Harris

Scot Parks