

Biddenden Parish Council

APPROVED Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held via Zoom On Tuesday 1 September 2020 at 7.30 pm

Present: Cllr J Tydeman (Chair) Cllr C Friend
Cllr D Boulding Cllr J Montgomery
Cllr M Clixby Cllr J Wright

Mrs A Swannick (Clerk)

One parishioner attended

The Chairman apologised for technical difficulties in starting the meeting.

1. Apologies for absence

Cllr T Bizley due to work commitments
Cllr E Cansdale due to technical issues
Cllr G Latter due to technical issues
Cllr R Hunt due to personal commitments

Borough Cllr Bell due to technical difficulties

Apologies for absence were accepted.

2. Any declarations of interest in items on the Agenda

None.

3. Any alterations to Disclosure of Pecuniary Interests

None.

4. Approval of the unapproved minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2020

The Unapproved minutes were deemed to be a true and proper record of the meeting. Proposed by: Cllr J Montgomery Seconded by: Cllr J Wright.

Unanimous.

Cllr Friend asked if any amendments could be highlighted in the set sent out to councillors so they could see where the changes were made. **Agreed.**

5. Report by Borough Councillor Neil Bell, ABC, to Parish Councillors

Due to the technical difficulties experienced Cllr Bell was unable to join the meeting but submitted a written report below:

“Westminster is issuing two White Papers which both look to be important for Biddenden.

Devolution

Firstly, a "Devolution" White paper which is likely to lead to Kent County Council and the various brough councils, including Ashford, to be reorganised - probably as unitary authorities with an executive mayor. Parish Councils are likely to remain or be strengthened (a good thing in my opinion) but I have concerns for Biddenden if the county is split and Biddenden is placed on the remote boundary of an "East Kent" authority.

Planning

Secondly, a planning paper which will put all land into three categories: designated for growth, renewal or protection. There will also be an algorithm(!) for new housing targets. Clearly there is the potential of too much too fast for Biddenden but I'm already talking to the planning officers to get to grips with this and hopefully protect Biddenden.

Housing

Lastly, I'd like to touch on the subject of local needs housing in Biddenden. I hope it's already known that I was absolutely incandescent with the Ashford Housing department about how a couple of recent allocations were made. Nonetheless, the department has done an awful lot of good for Biddenden residents over the years (not all of it is publicly known by the way) and they are keen, as am I, to turn a negative into a positive. I've received a long email with a great deal of analysis of housing need in Biddenden and I will be taking up this, together with the challenge of how to give folk in Biddenden who cannot use the internet a fair crack at the whip when applying.

I propose to talk to the chairman and/or the clerk and Cllr Cansdale, who has long experience with regards to Local Needs, about how we can progress this. I'd like to keep this group small as many of the details of Housing are sensitive and should not be circulated widely."

6. Parishioners' Questions

A parishioner stated that at the last ABC Planning Committee that application 19/00505/AS had been deferred until the next Planning Committee meeting due to access issues. The parishioner was concerned that changes were going to be made to the access conditions. The Clerk had emailed Cllr Bell whilst the meeting was taking place asking for clarification.

7. Any matters for information not on the agenda

- a) A request was made for the Clerk to look into the parish council joining the Rural Services Network. Unfortunately, there is no Parish Council section and so Biddenden has been invited to join the Market Towns group. **It was agreed** that the council would join the Market Towns group and that Cllr Wright would attend. There is a one week conference and it was agreed for Cllr Wright to attend.
- b) The Bowls club had replied to the parish council's request for a contribution to the path. **It was agreed** that the Parish Council should

go ahead and organise for the path to be resurfaced. The Bowls Club would be asked to reconsider their contribution.

- c) A Zoom meeting has been arranged with the Clerk and a company called Wireless CCTV Ltd, whose details were passed onto the parish council by ABC. Locally to Biddenden, they work with Ashford Borough Council, Kent County Council and they have worked with an array of other governmental organisations on larger projects such as MOD, NCA, OFCOM and Highways England. The meeting will take place on Thursday 3 September at 11 am via Zoom. Cllrs were asked who would like to attend the meeting. Cllrs Montgomery and Boulding expressed an interest although they couldn't make the date given. The Clerk will rearrange it.
- d) **Street Lights:** An email had been received from ABC. It stated that Phase 1 was the upgrading of the main Highway lighting as these were being handed over to KCC control. The light on the footpath and around the church will be in Phase 2/3. The plan is to see if the parish councils are able to take on some of the lights that have not been upgraded yet and to agree which lights they would be willing to take on. ABC would then pay for them to be upgraded to LED before that, but since the Covid-19 pandemic things may have changed slightly and projects put on the back burner. The Clerk was asked to find out what the costs were involved in taking over the lights such as maintenance.
- e) **Electric car charging:** In view of the letter from KCC relating to electric charging points, councillors are asked to consider if they would like to look into the matter further. This matter was briefly looked into in 2019. A meeting was to be organised with a provider following the June 2019 meeting but other issues took over. It was agreed to investigate the matter further.

8. Traffic Issues:

- Village Centre Road Junction. Cllr Friend has replied to Kent Highways on 12 August. No reply has been received but it will be chased mid-September.
- North Street development road junction with North Street: Nothing to report. It was agreed to contact the consultant on the original scheme.
- Castletons Oak Crossroads/Benenden Road: Nothing to report.
- Other traffic issues: to be raised at the meeting

9. Housing

There have been housing issues raised during the past month. The first is why Southern Housing stock in Sandeman Way is empty (1 house). The parishioner wished to know why and whether local connections for applications and mutual exchanges applied.

The second issue was the allocation of the two bungalows in The Weavers. Cllr Bell had negotiated an extension to the bidding process to allow applications from Biddenden. The Housing Department promised that they would be in contact with the Clerk. No contact was made and to encourage Biddenden residents to apply for the bungalows a notice was put on the Biddenden Community Facebook site. It then came to light that the Housing Department had allocated the bungalows to Ashford

families. This caused parishioners to be unhappy with the way it was handled. Cllr Bell communicated his and the Parish Council's concerns to the Housing Department. Discussion took place and the Clerk was asked to communicate to Cllr Bell that the Parish Council was by-passed and that Housing should communicate with the parish council first.

10. Telecommunications Mast

Shared Access has been in touch with both the parish council's grounds maintenance contractor about re-seeding and improving the area affected by mast works, and Penfolds in relation to filling the potholes in the top half of the MF car park. The latter was to be completed on 2 September.

11. Youth

At the last meeting it was agreed that Cllr Wright would put a schedule of recommendations together. These recommendations were completed. A proposal had been completed and it was agreed that the PC would not be responsible for running the activities but could make contributions towards it as a youth project.

Village cycle coaching - Cllr Bizley and cycling colleagues have done a risk assessment and booking process review for the Bedgebury coaching team from which they will apply the same approach and process for Biddenden & Smarden village cycle coaching. They will then determine two dates and publicise those in parish magazine as suggested once we have signed off booking process & risk assessment. They are suggesting to run these sessions as Bedgebury Forest Cycling Club events with the view to building longer term relationships between the local villages, Bedgebury Forest and cycling.

Items 12 and 13 were taken together.

12. Review of Complaints Procedure

Reviewed by Cllrs Friend and Montgomery.

13. Review of FOIA Internal Review Procedure

Reviewed by Cllrs Friend and Montgomery.

There were no amendments to the Complaints Procedure or the FOIA Internal Review Procedure. Proposed by: Cllr C Friend Seconded by: Cllr J Montgomery. **Unanimous.**

14. Group Reports:

- a) Working Group Reports
 - i) Millennium Field and Jubilee Meadow (Cllr Friend)

A meeting is being organised. It was suggested that a footpath be put placed on the MF from Sissinghurst Road entrance to the MF Car Park. This is to be looked at by the MF & JM Working Group.

ii) Traffic, Pedestrians, Footpaths and Cycling (Cllr J Wright)

A meeting was held on 6 August. Cllr Wright updated the meeting.

It was agreed that the Footpaths booklet was to be funded by the Parish Council. The Wealden Advertiser will invoice the Parish Council directly and it will be a BPC publication. It will cost approximately £200 per annum and will be done through the Walking group who will oversee it.

A Pedestrian Refuge crossing was requested for the village green. It would also prevent damage to the Bethersden marble.

A 20 mph speed limit will be requested for the High Street.

These items will be put in the HIP and this will become an agenda item.

Other issues included the removal of the speed indicator on the Sissinghurst Road, a No Entry Sign to North Street and improvement to Footpath AT10.

The working group was thanked for all the work they had done to improve safety in and around the village.

iii) Gordon Jones Playing Field and Play Area (Cllr Bizley)

The grounds maintenance contractors have been instructed to remove

The weeds around the outside of the tennis courts and under picnic tables etc.

A quote for the fencing along the edge of the car park has been received. A quote for post and rail fencing is awaited.

The back board on the slide will be replaced at a cost of approximately £200 plus VAT.

Multipurpose Trail: Trail section design specs have been received but still waiting on 'protective' section specs (over tree roots, those points where football pitches are within 3 m of the proposed trail). Once received, specs can then be sent to contractors for cost quotes

iv) Conservation Working Group (Cllr Wright)

An update to be given by Cllr Wright. A Teams meeting is provisionally organised for 7 September 2020 at 10.30 with the ABC Housing and Aspire teams about Cheeslands Recreation Ground.

v) Community Project Fund (Cllr Friend)

An invitation for applications will be sent out shortly with a deadline for the end of October.

vi) LTIDP (Cllr Hunt)

Nothing to report.

b) Other reports:

i) Police Liaison

16 crimes were reported in June 2020

Violence and sexual offences	6
Anti-social behaviour	5
Other theft	4
All other crime	1

PCSO Farnfield has advertised digital surgeries taking place

25 September 1 – 3 pm to speak to Youth Engagement and safeguarding officer

25 September 4 – 6 pm to discuss speeding, nuisance vehicles and crime reduction.

Neighbourhood Watch has chased up Chief Inspector Sparkes about reporting back on incidents. See reply attached.

The Clerk and Neighbourhood Watch met with PCSO Farnfield and explained local issues, also taking him to meet the Landlord of the Red Lion.

ii) KALC (Cllr Hunt/Cllr Bizley)

Cllr Boulding attended an Web Accessibility course on 12 August. Report to be given.

Cllr Wright attended the Joint Parishes Planning Committee on 12 August. Report to be given.

- iii) PO, Car park and toilets (Clerk)
 - A new electricity meter is being fitted in the Old Post Office.
 - The Cleaner is currently on holiday and a contractor is covering.
 - The height restriction barrier has been opened a couple of times without permission from the parish council. The padlock has been changed and keys issued to two councillors.

- iv) Tenterden Forum (Cllr Friend)

Nothing to report.

- v) Village Hall Management Committee (Cllr Friend)

Next meeting is 16 September.

The village hall can be used in line with covid-19 guidance and rules of hiring during covid-19 followed.

- vi) Health and Safety (Clerk)

The report had been circulated. No further comment.

15. Finance

- a) Payment List – Proposed by: Cllr M Clixby Seconded by: Cllr C Friend.
- b) Note accounts to 31 August 2020 – The bank statement was not available in time for the meeting and so the accounts will be circulated separately.
- c) Budget – any items to be included in the budget for 2021/22 . £1000 to be put in regarding youth activities.

16. Planning – to note decisions and any plans tabled

Case No	Parish	Location and Description	Decision
20/01002/AS	Biddenden	Bloomsburys Biddenden, Sissinghurst Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DQ Change of use of land from mixed camping use including 2 teepees, 4 yurts, 2 log cabins and 2 safari huts to the stationing of 10 log cabins to provide holiday accommodation.	Support
20/01008/AS	Biddenden	The Old Railway Station, Headcorn Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JA Outline application to consider access for the development of 5 dwellings on former Railway Station	Object
20/01074/AS	Biddenden	Birchley House Farm, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DZ Conversion of barn to form dwelling	Support
20/01075/AS	Biddenden	Birchley House Farm, Fosten Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8DZ Conversion of barn to form dwelling	Support
20/00192/CONA/AS	Biddenden	Ibornden Farm, Frittenden Road, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8LG Discharge condition 3, 4, 5	Support
20/01084/AS	Biddenden	The Forge House, 64-68 North Street, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8AS Revision to listed building consent 18/00840/AS (Single storey extension; internal alterations at ground, first and second floors, removal, replacement and enlargement of windows, replacement and addition of conservation rooflights; addition of flue, and re-instate lime plaster on laths for the roof and roof ashlar walls) to change design of the single storey extension to change windows/doors and addition of pitched roof	Support
20/01055/AS	Biddenden	Gorse Farm, Pook Lane, Biddenden, Ashford, Kent, TN27 8JJ Change of use of land to residential and erection of detached garage with rear store	Support

17. Correspondence

No comments or requests for copies received.

18. Items for future consideration

- i) Budget
- ii) Policies

19. Next meeting: **Parish Council meeting**, Tuesday 6 October 2020 – **All Welcome**

Alison Swannick 07783 223450
Parish Clerk