

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL
ON THURSDAY 12th JANUARY 2017**

Prior to the meeting commencing the Clerk informed everyone present that the meeting would be recorded as per the resolution made by the Council on July 14th 2016. She also stated that she had received apologies from the Chairman Cllr. Veitch, and the Vice Chairman Cllr. Rook. The procedure in this event according to Standing Orders, was that the councillors present are required to choose a councillor to preside at the meeting. Cllr. Holmes nominated Cllr. Goodchild, this was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed unanimously.

Cllr. Goodchild took the position of Chair and opened the meeting by reading out the following statement:

Members are required to declare any interests, dispensations, predetermination or lobbying on items on this agenda. Members are reminded that changes to the Register of Interests should be notified to the Clerk.

He welcomed everyone to the Meeting and reminded the members of the public that this was a meeting to which they are invited but it is not a public meeting. If a member of the public wished to speak on an item on the agenda he would close the meeting to allow them to speak but reserved the right to request that any significant questions be submitted in writing.

PRESENT: Cllr. Goodchild (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Hartley, Holmes, Swann & Warne.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fermor, Hall, Kemp, Rook, Smith & Veitch. Borough Cllrs. Hannam & Dawlings

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

193: The Chairman proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th December be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed.

PRECEPT APPROVAL:

194: Cllr. Swann reminded Members that all the Committees had set and agreed their own budgets and that Members had received copies of all budget sheets prior to the meeting. He handed out a spreadsheet in which all the figures had been collated. There was an overall increase of £21,000 which equates to 6.9%, however due to an increase in the tax base this means the increase in real terms is reduced to 4.31%, £5.25 per year on a Band D property. There had been significant increases in employer National Insurance contributions, the car park business rates and the litter clearing contract plus the cost of funding the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the cost of the by election last year, however, savings had been made elsewhere to reduce the impact of the increase. He invited questions.

Cllr. Hartley referred to the £40,000 allocated in the budget for the Community Centre and felt that the response to the loan poll suggested residents were not in support of funding it through the precept and that if it were omitted, there would be no requirement for an increase at all. Cllr. Swann reiterated that this Council had voted to build a community centre and that desire still remained, the loan poll indicated that residents were not in favour of taking out a loan to fund it. In response to Cllr. Warne, he confirmed the spending to date, this financial year under the Community Centre cost code was £18,000.

At the request of Cllr. Hartley, the Chairman closed the meeting to allow a parishioner to comment. The parishioner stated that she was very impressed with the amount of work that Cllr. Swann put into preparing the budgets and appreciated the time he had spent in explaining the process to her, however she remained of the opinion that reserves should be used as opposed to increasing the precept.

The Chairman reopened the meeting to allow Cllr. Swann to propose a Precept of £325,200 as set out in the document filed with these Minutes be agreed, this was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan, with 8 votes in favour and 1 against, therefore the motion was carried.

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

195: In the absence of Cllr. Veitch, Cllr. Goodchild read out the following report that she had prepared for the meeting:

A Happy New Year to you all.

I hope that the Parish Council will achieve great things for the community this year.

I would like to extend a formal welcome to our new Deputy Clerk, Laura Larkin, and to express my good wishes for her career with the Parish Council. I am sure that you will all help to make her very welcome.

William Benson, CEO of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, has written to the Co-operative Group about the access rights to Wilkes Field, and has had an encouraging response. The Co-op has requested more information from TWBC which has been sent to them, and we are now awaiting their response. I am optimistic that this will all be satisfactorily resolved before too long.

We have invited Carole Wanless to come and present her report to us all at the February Parish Council, rather than trying to fit in another Extraordinary meeting.

Cllr. Goodchild suggested that if any members had any comments or questions on the report that they be directed to Cllr. Veitch on her return.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

196: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 10th January and specifically to a quote from Cllr. Clifford during the budget discussion who had felt that we delivered remarkably good value for money, he felt that was echoed by all the Committee. Cllr. Goodchild then proposed adoption of the report; this was seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

197: Cllr. Bunyan referred to the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th December and invited questions? None were raised. She reminded Members that the next meeting would be held at the amended time of 6pm to ensure we would be quorate. She also mentioned that she would be attending the TWBC Planning Committee meeting next week to speak in support of the Rifle Range application.

Cllr. Hartley stated he had received an email from Cllr. Linda Hall in which she expressed disappointment at the decision by TWBC to cease the practice of sending notification letters to the neighbouring properties of planning applicants. Cllr. Bunyan suggested that the issue could be discussed at the next planning meeting.

BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

198: Cllr Clifford advised that the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 17th January. He referred to the major work about to commence on the trees in St. Dunstan's Churchyard and advised that we would be undertaking a survey for the trees in Sissinghurst Cemetery. He also expressed immense sadness at the recent vandalism to the red telephone box at Bakers Cross that we acquired last year and suggested that we would have to think hard about how we considered utilising them.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

199: Cllr. Holmes stated the next meeting would be held on 21st February. He advised he was awaiting contact from a parishioner regarding the Five Year Plan although he suspected that they believed the information would be more than the aide memoir it currently serves as to remind the Committee of reviews, but he was happy to speak to them.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

200: In the absence of Cllr. Rook, Cllr Holmes stated he was not aware of any issues that he needed to bring before this meeting and that the next meeting was on March 14th. Cllr. Swann informed Members that yesterday he had met members of the KHWP and joined in their work party down in the Crane Valley along with other volunteers mainly from Cranbrook in Bloom. They had coppiced a lot of trees, had a really good clean up and it all looked magnificent. He would like to express his thanks to all the volunteers that took part.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

201: Cllr. Warne informed Members that although they have not had a recent meeting she had started to arrange dates with the consultant for the engagement process, the first one being what is called 'the Inception Meeting' which is scheduled for next Thursday 19th January and involves the Steering Group and any Members of the Council that wish to attend. Part of the meeting will consist of touring around the Parish, she has compiled a proposed itinerary starting in the morning in Cranbrook continuing on to Sissinghurst in the afternoon. Areas not covered on the Thursday will be visited on the following day. The next dates to arrange are described as the 'Visioning Events', representatives of community groups and key stakeholders from the community will be invited to those. One event will be held on Wednesday 22nd March at St. Georges Institute in Sissinghurst and one on Thursday 23rd March in Cranbrook, she has not yet been able to secure a location for that event, and was happy to receive suggestions for a suitable venue. Following on from those events the consultant will write a report, before moving onto a three day design forum 9th – 11th May. Finding a venue is currently proving quite challenging, so if anyone has any ideas they would be gratefully received. Several suggestions were put forward by Members, which Cllr. Warne would follow up.

CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA COMMITTEE:

202: Cllr. Bunyan advised the next meeting was scheduled for 25th January.

KALC:

203: Members had received the latest newsletter and draft minutes of the meeting held 23rd November, Cllr Goodchild suggested if there were any questions or comments they should be referred to Cllr. Veitch on her return.

CLERK'S REPORT:

204: There was nothing to report.

CORRESPONDANCE:

205: An email had been received from Paul Shipley – Contract Services Manager for TWBC to inform us of the imminent removal of the cardboard recycling banks in the Regal Car Park in response to our request. Cllr. Holmes referred to the article by Cllr. Rook in the December Parish magazine in which he informed parishioners of this decision.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

206: Cllr. Goodchild gave advance notice of ‘Lambing Weekend ‘at the High Weald Academy on 18th/19th March.

207: Cllr. Cook stated he remained disappointed at the signage displayed on the walls outside Image Barbers in Carrier Road, he felt it overbearing and unnecessary.

208: Cllr. Cook stated his concern regarding the drainage in the Crane Valley/Tanyard when the snow melts. Cllr Hartley reassured him he will continue to check the culvert on a regular basis.

209: Cllr. Hartley referred to the apology printed in the Courier to a Cranbrook Councillor. He felt this important for the reputation of this Council and that it should be noted that as a ‘body’ we are pleased that the exoneration has been delivered.

210: Cllr. Clifford informed Members that he had attended a ‘Men’s Breakfast’ recently at which Cllr. Holman of Benenden gave a fascinating talk on his life and he would have no hesitation in recommending him if anyone was looking for a speaker.

211: Cllr. Swann mentioned the advance layouts he had seen of a new parish magazine and was very excited by them.

212: Cllr. Holmes reported that the current curator of Cranbrook museum intends to retire this year, however he would be staying on to assist with other duties.