

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL
ON THURSDAY 14TH JULY 2016**

The Chairman read 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.

No interests were registered. No one registered that they were going to record the meeting.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting. She reminded members of the public that this is a Meeting to which the public are invited, but it is not a public meeting. She would close the meeting at the end of the main agenda to allow them to speak briefly if they choose. She reserved the right to ask that significant questions be submitted in writing. The Chairman reminded members of the public not to disrupt the meeting and if they continued to do so after a request from herself as Chairman to desist, she had the power to ask them to leave. Having said that; she welcomed the interest from the members of public in our proceedings.

Cllr. Veitch reminded everyone that courtesy is due to attendees.

PRESENT: Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Goodchild, Holmes, Kemp, Rook, Smith, Swann, Veitch & Warne. Borough Cllrs. Dawlings & Hannam.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Hall & Hartley.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

52: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th June be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed. Cllr. Bunyan pointed out a typographical error on item 35 which was amended.

RECORDING OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS:

53: The Chairman reminded Members that this topic was first raised last year, and at the time there was not enough information available for the Parish Council to make any real decision. At the KALC Chairman's meeting recently she suggested the topic as a future agenda item. It was clear that there is much interest in the topic, albeit with little real experience. The Deputy Clerk has undertaken more research into the technology available, the outcome of which you were given in your wallets for the last meeting when the item was deferred to tonight's meeting. Cllr. Veitch stated that she was not against recording of meetings, although the concerns about the details that she raised a year ago still hold good. Nevertheless, it may be appropriate to undertake some recording on a trial basis. Her thoughts were that:-

- Since regulations now allow recording of meetings by members of the public, it may be useful for the Parish Council also to have access to recordings.
- It may be useful on a trial basis to record meetings as a clerk's aid.
- She would only suggest recording Parish Council meetings, not Committee meetings, so as not to impede the free and open discussions that are often had in Committees.

- If the actual recording works well enough, we could, at a later date, restrict the minutes to the minimum, and have the recordings held on the website. The clerks perhaps spend 18 – 21 hours a month preparing minutes. This could be reduced to perhaps 6 hours a month if the minutes were shortened. She is concerned about the increasing workload of the clerks, this would therefore be an advantage.

The Chairman referred to the Minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee where Members will note the decision made with regard to WiFi in the Council Chamber and Vestry Hall. She invited comments from Members.

Cllr. Holmes referred to the last meeting where two businesses made presentations to the Council and this was being recorded by a member of the public. We should have made it clear that the meeting was being recorded.

Cllr. Clifford stated that he was used to recordings in his professional career and it was a valuable tool, however a hard copy was still necessary and he was concerned on who would undertake the technical work involved – someone would need to make a copy for the meeting. Cllr. Rook reminded Members that minutes do not have to be a verbatim transcript; they do not have to record what every councillor says. We could reduce minutes to salient points only and if there was an issue we have the recording. We produce very full minutes but we do not need them to be so full. Cllr. Clifford stated that the Clerk should be commended on her minute taking. Even if the minutes are reduced someone still has to type them up. There would be extra work if there are minutes and recordings. Cllr. Rook reminded Members that there had been challenges to the minutes in the past and it was difficult to defend the challenge as there was no recording. Members of the public can record meetings and we have no control over any editing or distribution. Cllr. Clifford was saddened to hear that councillors had challenged minutes; it was not in the spirit of the Parish Council.

Cllr. Kemp stated that the work of the clerks was beyond reproach, they had a heavy work load and recording would ease the load on them and make a better use of their services. He referred to the NDP Committee which could not be clerked because of the work load and minute taking was very difficult. If we decide to record, this should be as a back-up and only the actions which were agreed would need to be recorded on hard copy. Challenges to the minutes were by councillors looking for malicious gain.

Cllr. Bunyan stated that the status quo was a good record which can remind people of the conversations but she thought the recording was a good idea and could be reassuring for the clerks if they needed to re-run the conversations.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Fairweather, the Chairman confirmed that the suggestion was for a six month trial period. In this day and age members of the public can record and there is a risk if we also do not record the meeting. Cllr. Fairweather described a recording system which is used in his place of work; this system can be set up with minimal costs. A brief discussion took place on technical issues and software.

Cllr. Goodchild asked for the Clerks view. The Clerk stated that her preference would be for a future proof system which could be uploaded onto the website. The Chairman responded to a question from Cllr. Fermor and stated that it was not the intention to provide each councillor with an individual audio recording. Cllr. Cook made the suggestion that we should trial recordings for three months and then if satisfactory up-load to the website.

Cllr. Goodchild agreed, stating that the clerks could then provide very minimal minutes if the recordings were on the website. Cllr. Swann agreed and suggested bullet point minutes.

The Chairman thought the idea of phasing was a good idea, record for the first three months with full minutes then go to the next stage with uploading to the website with minimal minutes and then review. She suggested that the reviews and costings now revert to the Policy & Resources Committee. Cllr. Veitch then proposed that:

Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council will record the Parish Council Meetings on a six month trial basis with the technology to be determined by the Policy & Resources Committee.

The motion was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed unanimously.

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

54: The Chairman reported that she had attended the Parish Chairman's meeting in Tunbridge Wells on the 14th June and she had briefly met with David Jukes and Alan McDermott beforehand. They have agreed to attend our next Parish Council meeting and she intends that councillors will be able to be able to raise questions to them. She had attended the Garden Safari on the 12th June and she hoped other councillors had attended and enjoyed it as much as she had. The Fun Day was on the 19th June on the Rammell Field and we had a constant stream of people stopping to talk to us at our stand. They were interested in the picture boards of the Cranbrook Engineering site/Community Centre and were overwhelmingly in favour. She thanked everyone that helped to make the day a success. She had attended the 500th Anniversary Committee at Cranbrook School with Cllr. Cook and had encouraged the Committee to plan and schedule the events so that as many as possible can be all inclusive and visible to residents of Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. The CAB had a stall outside the Co-op on the 24th June and the High Sherriff attended. Cllr. Veitch reported that she was also able to attend and she had stressed how much we and the residents appreciate the service the CAB provides.

26th June was the Armed Forces Day Service at St. Dunstan's, in particular commemorating the centenary of the battles of the Somme and Jutland. She regretted that only a few councillors were able to accompany her to that service. On the 29th June the High Weald Academy had an event to celebrate their Flanders Field project. Several of the local primary schools sent representatives, who were later able to take part in a variety of sports events. She reported that she had also had an informal meeting with John Weeds, the headmaster of Cranbrook School.

The Chairman informed Members that we have been advised that the planning application for the Cranbrook Engineering site/Wilkes Field will probably be on the agenda for the TWBC Planning Committee on Wednesday 7th September. Our September Parish Council meeting is scheduled for the following day.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

55: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 12th July and pointed out the significant issues. He handed over to Cllr. Clifford to present the item on Promoting Cranbrook and Sissinghurst & Communicating with Residents. All Members had been furnished with a copy.

Cllr. Clifford stated that he, Cllr. Holmes and Cllr. Warne had met and their ideas had been put forward in the document which Members had all received. This had been discussed at length in the Policy & Resources Committee. He highlighted the issues which the group had thought worthy of consideration which were:-

- Social media
- How we communicate in print – He tabled various editions of glossy colour magazines which were paid for by advertising.
- Parish Council surgeries – one to ones with residents.
- Use of technology – purchase email lists which is a speedy way of sending out information.
- Youth Parish Council – resurrect – we had one in the past which fell away. Cllr. Rook was in charge of the YPC and would be able to advise.

Cllr. Clifford hoped that councillors would support the initiatives and ideas in the report and he seeks approval. He invited questions.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Swann, he confirmed that he would continue with press releases. Cllr. Goodchild thanked Cllrs. Clifford, Holmes and Warne and asked Members if they thought we were on the right track with phase 1. Cllr. Rook referred to the YPC and stated that it failed in the past, it was hard work. Young people came onto the YPC then fell away as they had exams and then went on to universities or into work. Cllr. Warne informed Members that she had met with Paddock Wood Council who had involved school children in the Neighbourhood Plan and she thought the starting point would be to contact the head teachers of High Weald Academy and Cranbrook School. Cllr. Rook stated that young people have to be involved in a neighbourhood plan. Cllr. Warne stated that Carrie Beech HWA had already agreed to meet the NDP Committee.

Cllr. Swann mentioned the item on the Minutes which referred to the cost for the emptying of the litter bins; he wanted to look more fully into this. Cllr. Goodchild pointed out that the item was highlighted as still being under investigation. He then proposed adoption of the Report; this was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

56: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. She invited questions. No questions were raised.

BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

57: Cllr. Clifford stated that there is a site meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

58: Cllr. Holmes referred to the report of the meeting held on the 21st June. He was confident that it is a strong committee this year. He invited questions. No questions were raised and he therefore proposed adoption of the report. This was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

59: Cllr. Rook referred to the report of the site meeting held on the 14th June and stated that generally everything was in good order. There were a few issues with the allotments and as some Members had to leave early unfortunately Jubilee Field was not inspected. Cllr. Fermor had been asked to inspect and report back.

Cllr. Fermor reported that everything was in good order, excepting the hedge on the frontage required cutting. The Clerk informed her that this was always cut just prior to the August Bank Holiday Fete. Cllr. Fermor reported that the hedge needed cutting in Common Road. Cllr. Fairweather responded that it had been cut this week. Cllr. Cook reported that a litter bin had been damaged in the Crane Valley. The Clerk responded that the bin had been removed and put into storage for the time being.

Cllr. Smith referred to the budget figures set out in relation to the car parks. Cllr. Swann confirmed that these had actually been reduced from last year. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that we had been accruing funds for future resurfacing; when we inherited the car parks we had a pot of nil for maintenance. Cllr. Swann mentioned that TWBC staggered the business rates and there will be an overspend showing up on this. Cllr. Rook explained that if we do need to carry out emergency works we need to know we have the funds, it is prudent book keeping. Cllr. Swann informed Members that the grant of £9,700 for work in the Crane Valley had been paid into our bank account. Cllr. Rook then proposed that the Report be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

60: Cllr. Kemp informed Members that unfortunately with the absence of the book held by Cllr. Hall, that this is hindering the process somewhat. He and Cllr. Bunyan had met Richard Eastman of Feria who had worked on NDP's at Hawkhurst, Paddock Wood, Staplehurst and Loose. They had set a high benchmark. Two other companies will be approached. Two sets of minutes had been circulated to Members for the meetings held on the 25th April and the 26th June and he proposed adoption of these Reports. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed. Cllrs. Smith and Warne were elected as Vice Chairmen of the Committee.

Cllr. Kemp then proposed that Cllr. Matthew Hartley be nominated to join the Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

Cllr. Clifford asked what funding had been set aside in the budget. Cllr. Swann stated that there was £5,000 was set aside in this financial year with a further amount of £2,500 in earmarked funds which had been allocated for parish plans. Cllr. Rook asked whether interests were declared at committee meetings and Cllr. Kemp confirmed that the Committee were asked to declare any interests. Cllr. Warne stated that the Committee was not a decision making body. Responding to a question from Cllr. Swann, Cllr. Kemp confirmed that the approval of any delegates would come before Full Council. Cllr. Smith suggested that the generic template for minutes would be more helpful. Cllr. Cook confirmed to Cllr. Bunyan that he had been tasked with finding out about grant funding. Cllr. Kemp reminded Members that it had been agreed that the meetings would be held on the first Wednesday of the month with the next meeting being on the 3rd August. Cllr. Warne informed Members that she had attended the Paddock Wood NDP meeting and they were seven months into the process. They had a packed house for the meeting. They were also very positive about Feria. Responding to a question from Cllr. Holmes who had noted that Paddock Wood had a NDP website, twitter etc, Cllr. Warne confirmed that they were a brand – they even had Tshirts and pens.

CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

61: Cllrs. Bunyan & Swann stated that there had been no recent meeting. Cllr. Kemp informed Members that he was still trying to contact Mark Stephenson, TWBC Conservation Architect regarding the Conservation Area Management Plan.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

62: The Parish News has been circulated.

ACTION WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES IN KENT:

63: There was nothing to report.

CLERKS REPORT:

64: The Clerk had nothing to report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

65: A letter had been received from the agent acting for the owner of Angley Stud. The owner would not be objecting to the claimed footpath in Angley Woods and looks forward to working closely with the Parish Council as he seeks to create a centre of excellence for dressage horses at Angley Stud.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

66: Cllr. Veitch reminded everyone that the new civic amenity refuse schedule is now in place and a copy of the details were put into the latest Parish Newsletter. Cllr. Swann stated that it looked as though the parish councils were in partnership with the Borough on this issue and some parishioners were blaming the parish on the reduced service.

67: Cllr. Clifford reported that he had attended a recent meeting of the Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Promotion Group which are meeting in the Rugby Club once a month. They currently have no terms of reference and the recently appointed Chairman has resigned. One issue he had been asked to raise with the Parish Council was whether “free parking” could be added onto the gateway signs. Cllr. Veitch agreed to mention this to Kent County Councillor Sean Holden.

68: Cllr. Warne reported that despite road closure notices being put up in Tilsden Lane for resurfacing works, this had now been delayed and would be carried out in September, weather permitting. There were also pot holes in Swattenden Lane. She commended people to report any issues on the KCC website. It is a simple process. She also commended Members to take up any training days offered by KALC – she had recently attended the training and had learnt a lot.

69: Borough Cllr. Dawlings referred to the Benenden Parish Magazine which had been tabled earlier. This had been the result of the Parish Plan process and was an amalgamation of the Parish Newsletter and the St. George’s Church Magazine. Following the disastrous Gladman decision, the Conservative Group had scheduled a meeting with Greg Clarke MP. Unfortunately he now has a change of role and is in charge of energy and business. They will still speak to him about the vulnerability of the Borough with regard to the lack of the five year housing land supply. With regard to the Call for Sites and the new Local Plan, Borough Members are having a presentation by the Planners next week; one option being considered is the building of a new rural community with new infrastructure. The Five Year Plan is being updated – this Ward only had one mention in the previous edition and that was the community centre. Improvements for recycling are an important issue and with the consideration of a new contract looming, the option for glass collection could be considered. Neighbourhood Plans are also another important consideration. Please let him know if we want anything raised. Cllr. Dawlings confirmed to Cllr. Clifford it was a briefing for Borough Members only.

70: Cllr. Hannam mentioned the Joint Transport Board meeting where speed limits were discussed with regards to a 20mph in rural villages. They were looking to undertake a pilot scheme in one or two villages and Goudhurst, Frittenden and Sissinghurst had been mentioned as good candidates. Hilary Smith is leading on the project and is keen to push ahead with the pilot. Any scheme has to be self-enforcing with the necessary street furniture in place such as chicanes. The entire area of the village has to be covered. There is no funding yet available for the pilot scheme. Perhaps an enthusiastic parish might be willing to make a contribution towards a scheme. The Chairman informed Cllr. Hannam that this subject would be put on the next Environmental Management agenda. Responding to a question from Cllr. Rook, Cllr. Hannam stated that the policy had changed with regard to chicanes on A roads. Cllr. Cook stated that these schemes run very smoothly on the continent.

The Chairman closed the meeting to enable members of the public to comment or ask questions.

- Thanked the Council for taking on board the need for access to defibrillators being available for 24/7.
- There are no “Cold Calling” signs in Sissinghurst. Could we look into putting some up. Cllr. Rook volunteered to investigate.
- Contractors are taking up spaces in the car parks. Cllr. Veitch responded that we took the view that the works to the Church were for the community but we could look at charges for contractors carrying out building works to properties.
- Why is the item of fundraisers not on the agenda? The Chairman clarified that this would not be considered until we know the result of the planning application.
- Ownership of the land for the community centre in relation to fundraising. The Chairman confirmed that this would be dealt with by a S106 Legal Agreement.
- VAT Report – Do you have it? You will be liable for VAT. The Chairman confirmed that we did have the Report. The company which prepared it are quite happy to come and explain their report and the implications. It is premature to discuss this until we know the outcome of the planning application. It will then be in the public domain. It is a very complicated issue and needs careful consideration.
- Concerns if the building is put in a Trust. The Chairman suggested that any further questions be put in writing as we cannot go into details this evening.

The Chairman then read out the proposal to close the meeting to members of the public and press to enable two confidential items to be considered. This was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed.