

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE  
PARISH ROOM, SISSINGHURST ON THURSDAY  
10<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 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.

Dr. Joy Temple notified the Clerk that she would be recording the meeting.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Goodchild, Hall, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp, Swann and Veitch. Borough Cllr. Hannam.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Rook and Smith. Borough & KCC Cllr. Holden.

The Chairman welcomed Cllr. Clifford to the meeting following his recent bout of ill health.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

248: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11th February be adopted as a true record. Cllr. Cook pointed out two typographical errors on page 3 which were amended. The proposal was then seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed. Cllr. Hall abstained.

**PRESENTATION BY PETER TULLETT – CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAUX:**

249: Cllr. Veitch welcomed Mr. Tullett to the meeting. He informed Members that he was an Advice Support Officer. The CAB has offices in Tunbridge Wells and Cranbrook and in 2014/15 they had 5,800 clients. They are an independent charity relying on contributions and volunteers. They offer advice on such things as welfare, debt, housing and employment issues as well as helping people with benefit forms and appeals. He explained how much debt the CAB had offered advice on and how this had been managed. Their work is confidential, impartial and independent and the advice is free. The volunteers come from all walks of life and they give up many hours of their time to help. The work of the CAB is reliant on the volunteers. There is face to face contact as well as email and skype. The Bureaux also offers outreach such as home visits if necessary to help with disabled benefit advice. Visits can also be made to the rural areas i.e. Sissinghurst, Frittenden and Hawkhurst by appointment. Rural road shows are going to be rolled out in the TWBC area to give information on the CAB in May, June and July. He would welcome suggestions for locations and any local events. There is also to be a local leaflet drop and he would welcome some help with delivering the leaflets. Mr. Tullett thanked the Parish Council for their support with funding and he hoped that the support would continue. He invited questions.

In reply to a question from Cllr. Holmes, he confirmed that the CAB do offer advice on pensions – Maidstone is the hub for enquires but there is a specialist officer at the Tunbridge Wells Office. With regard to the question on why there are more employment issues in the rural area than the urban he did not have the information with him this evening. Cllr. Veitch reminded Mr. Tullett that the Parish Newsletter would be going out in June and we would be happy to accept an article and we could also include information on the Parish website. She then closed the meeting to allow any members of the public to ask questions. One question was raised regarding pro bono legal advice.

#### CHAIRMANS REPORT:

250: The Chairman suggested that everyone should have a look at the Parish website which contained a lot of very useful information. She informed Members that she had attended a recent KALC Chairman's Conference at East Malling where she had learnt that 40% of England has parishes. She had made some notes if anyone was interested in reading them.

Cllr. Hall asked why the Loan Poll had not been issued. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that we were still awaiting a response on the reply paid envelope from the Royal Mail.

#### POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

251: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> March and specifically to the visit proposed to Major Clarkes House, this had now been cancelled. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that it would be rearranged. Cllr. Bunyan referred to the item regarding St. George's Institute – Action with Communities in Rural England had prepared a document which explained that Parishes could borrow money to help village halls. Before this has been fully considered, there are some outstanding issues which needed attention including some issues with the legal papers and also the preparation of a business plan. We are looking into it with a general willingness to help. Cllr. Goodchild invited questions, no questions were raised so therefore he proposed adoption of the report; this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed. Cllr. Hall abstained.

#### PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

252: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. There is a current consultation on site availability called SHELA – strategic housing and employment land assessment. If anyone has any sites they think suitable they should contact TWBC. The Consultation runs until August.

#### BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

253: Cllr. Clifford thanked Cllr. Bunyan for standing in for him and informed Members that the next meeting is scheduled for the 19<sup>th</sup> April. Cllr. Cook reported that he had met with two parishioners at the Sissinghurst Cemetery to overcome an issue with regard to the new cremation section.

#### ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

254: Cllr. Holmes stated that the next meeting was scheduled for the 22<sup>nd</sup> March, however the Cranbrook Business Association are hoping to have an open meeting in the Vestry Hall for a re-launch and it would be more appropriate if Committee Members attended the open meeting.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

255: Cllr. Veitch, in the absence of Cllr. Rook, informed Members that the next meeting is scheduled for the 15<sup>th</sup> March. Play equipment on the Jubilee Field is on the agenda. The recent litter pick in Cranbrook was well attended. She handed over to Cllr. Fairweather to inform Members on the Sissinghurst litter pick. He confirmed that this would be held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April and leaflets would be circulated – everyone to meet up at The Milk House at 10 am, refreshments are being sponsored by the public house.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

256: Cllr. Kemp informed everyone that we were at the first stage of the process, the application had been made to TWBC and they now have to consult with the public. Our application covered the full area of the parish – Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. We will be scheduling a public meeting in April and will be looking for volunteers. He explained what a Neighbourhood Plan would entail and that it has to be personal, someone has to own the process. We need to recruit members of the public to go on the committee.

#### CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

257: Cllrs. Bunyan and Swann informed Members that the next meeting is at the end of the month.

#### KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

258: Cllr. Veitch reported that she had attended a recent meeting of KALC when the Clerk took the Minutes. She thanked Mrs Bancroft for giving a presentation on Sissinghurst Speedwatch. Hawkhurst Cllr. Julia Newman gave a presentation of their experience with their Neighbourhood Plan. Other things discussed were the civic amenity refuse vehicle and the future of the mobile library service.

#### ACTION WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES IN KENT:

259: There was nothing to report.

#### CLERKS REPORT:

260: The Clerk referred to the presentation being given on the 11<sup>th</sup> March by Charles Church regarding Brick Kiln Farm. She had received a letter from Countryside Properties to make us aware that the red line area shown on the plan by Charles Church was incorrect as it included land being part of Corn Hall Farm.

She stated that she had now received a reply from the believed owners of the former Windmill Inn, they have confirmed that the property will be the subject of a planning application to convert the former public house into a single dwelling. She had a set of the proposed plans which she would be happy to show anyone interested.

#### CORRESPONDENCE:

261: The Clerk reported that a letter of thanks had been received from Messy Church with regard to the recent grant.

#### ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

262: Cllr. Veitch reported that the annual scout's parade would be held on the 24<sup>th</sup> April and assemble in the Regal Car Park.

263: Cllr. Holmes referred to the local visitor attractions which would soon be opening for the new season. If anyone has any free time, volunteers are always welcome.

264: Cllr. Swann made everyone aware that an exhibition would soon be taking place with regard to the Cranbrook Community Centre.

265: Cllr. Goodchild informed everyone that it is lambing weekend event at the High Weald Academy.

266: Cllr. Fairweather stated that the appeal decision for the Gladman site was due towards the end of the month, there was no news yet.

267: Borough Cllr. Hannam stated that the TWBC budget had been set and Cllr. Holden had been defeated with regard to the civic amenity refuse vehicle. Cllr. Hannam stated that he had abstained. A rural group is going to be set up to rebalance the issues between the urban area and rural area. With regard to his project to bring down the speed limits to 20mph, it needs a local champion to act as a mailbox, with a website and email address. TWBC Council Tax went up by £5.00 and they continue to be affected by Government cuts. Councillor's allowances have been frozen. Cllr. Cook mentioned that the Mayor costs £1,000 per week.

Cllr. Veitch then closed the meeting to allow questions from parishioners.

- Cllrs. Kemp and Hall gave more information regarding the aspirations of a Neighbourhood Plan to a resident from Friezley Lane.
- Nancy Warne introduced herself as one of the candidates for the Cranbrook Ward election on the 17<sup>th</sup> March and stated that the Parish Council should have responded quicker to the anonymous leaflet which had been circulated. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that a correction had been included in the March Newsletter.
- Dr. Temple stated that she was one of the persons responsible for being involved in the leaflet and it did contain an email address. She had issues with the information in the Newsletter.
- A Sissinghurst resident queried the information given by Cllr. Bunyan with regard to the St. George's Institute – this again would cost the ratepayer if a loan was taken out.
- A general discussion took place with regard to the cost to the ratepayers with regard to any loans taken out by the Parish Council.
- Mr. Bancroft mentioned that both of the parish defibrillators were in premises which were locked at night i.e. The George Hotel and The Milk House and he suggested that the opportunity should be looked at to put some in more available locations.
- A resident of Hovendens asked for a litter bin to be sited at Cobnut Close near to the bus stop. Cllr. Fairweather stated that this had already been mentioned to our Borough Councillors to take forward.
- A resident of Hendley Drive was concerned on the security of the proposed Loan Poll and it could be abused. He demanded that the Poll should be an official Poll carried out under the remit of the Borough Council. Cllr. Veitch stated that this would cost ratepayers in the region of £5,000. She re-iterated that the Loan Poll voting slips would all be numbered. Other parishioners felt the system could be open to abuse and a call was made by at least ten members of the public that an official parish poll be conducted by the Borough Council.