

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL
ON THURSDAY 10th NOVEMBER 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.

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

PRESENT: Cllrs. Bunyan, Cook, Goodchild, Fairweather, Fermor, Hall, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp, Rook, Smith, Swann, & Veitch.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Clifford & Warne. Borough Cllr. Dawlings & Hannam.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

137: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13th October be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed. Cllr. Holmes abstained.

SELECTION OF NDP CONSULTANT:

138: In the absence of Cllr. Warne, the Chairman referred to the Minutes of the last Policy & Resources Committee and reported that Cllr. Warne has deferred this item to the next meeting as a third consultant is going to make a presentation.

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

139: The Chairman hoped that councillors would be able to attend the Service of Remembrance on Sunday at St Dunstan's and Trinity Church to show our support for the community. The Service of Thanksgiving in October at St Dunstan's for the completion of the work on the church tower was a very pleasant and joyous occasion, she regretted that there were not more councillors present.

In respect of the Community Centre, we have just received a response from the Co – op Head of Property to her letters to the Chief Executive and negotiations are ongoing. She is considering a response as there are factual errors in their letter. Together with Cllr Rook, she is scheduled to meet with the officers at TWBC next week to agree the next actions. This is likely to involve a meeting at Manchester with our MP Helen Grant and herself, and possibly someone from TWBC.

Meanwhile the Consultant, Carole Wanless has been very busy meeting and talking to people. Meetings have taken longer to arrange than she had hoped, but she is nearly finished, and her report will be available in a couple of weeks. She is visiting the Parish Office on Monday to check some facts before the report is completed.

The Slow Worm Management plan was submitted to the Planning Officer, Ellen Gilbert, in a timely fashion to meet condition 3 of the Planning Permission. Slow Worms are actually lizards and not worms.

The advertisements for the Deputy Clerk position appeared in the Wealden Advertiser for two weeks, and we received several interesting responses. Together with Cllr. Goodchild she had compiled a short list of candidates for interview, and the interviews are scheduled for next Wednesday.

She had attended a meeting on Tuesday together with Cllr. Cook with regard to the Cranbrook School 500th Committee.

The Art Show is being held in the Vestry Hall at the moment. She was sure that all visitors will find something that they appreciate, and possibly purchase.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

140: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 8th November when they discussed the Deputy Clerk position and also the promotion of the Parish Council. Cllr. Clifford and his sub-committee is making a presentation at the next meeting with regard to a new magazine and he has promised that we will be impressed. Discussions also took place on the budget for the next financial year and in the spirit of community it was agreed to see if the Cobblers Shop which has been damaged by fire could relocate temporarily into a portacabin in Jockey Lane Car Park. He invited questions. Cllr. Swann referred to 46/16 and stated that if the NDP went ahead there would be a large increase in the precept and part of the process is that there will have to be a referendum and the costs of a referendum would be £8,000. Cllr. Smith confirmed to Cllr. Hall that projected costs had been obtained from consultants. Cllr. Swann stated that he had looked at the quotes with Cllr. Warne and some costs could be quashed from the process but it was coming out at £49,000, there was a grant of £9,000, there is already £7,500 in earmarked reserves so the figure we are looking for is £32,000 excluding the cost of the referendum with it being split over two years. Responding to a question from Cllr. Bunyan, Cllr. Goodchild confirmed that a portacabin could be jacked up in the car park to overcome the problem of the levels. Cllr. Swann confirmed to Cllr. Smith that he checks all the bank statements and all the financial transactions as part of his monthly internal check, there is no standard audit report. The Clerk reminded everyone that there is the monthly check, internal audit checks by KCC in October and May and the annual audit by Littlejohn. Cllr. Goodchild then proposed adoption of the report; this was seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed. Cllr. Hall abstained.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

141: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. She reported that two payphones, one in Sissinghurst and one in Cranbrook were being removed. There was a discussion on whether one of the original red kiosks could be moved to Sissinghurst and this would be on the agenda for Burials and Properties. She invited questions.

Cllr. Hartley mentioned the application for the change of use of the Auction Rooms which is a significant high profile business. Cllr. Bunyan reminded Members that this had already been given consent in the past but had now lapsed and this was a resubmission.

BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

142: In the absence of Cllr. Clifford, Cllr. Bunyan referred to the report of the meeting held on the 25th October. She invited questions. Cllr. Swann informed Members that a quote had been accepted for works to the trees in St. Dunstan's in the sum of £16,420 – the good news is that £15,000 has already been set aside. Cllr. Goodchild noted the information regarding the red BT kiosks in the report. Cllr. Bunyan then proposed that the report be adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

143: Cllr. Holmes stated that the next meeting is on Tuesday 15th at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

144: Cllr. Rook reported that he had today attended the Kent Highways Parish Seminar which had been both interesting and frustrating at the same time. They have no funds and the central government cuts are hitting them hard. There is to be a new law that HGVs can only park overnight in appropriate places. In other places they can only park for 20 minutes before moving on. The only problem is that there are no appropriate places. They have spent £3m on repairing pot holes this year and the customer enquiries are coming in at 500 per month which is the lowest level for four years. They could not confirm that the £3m would be ongoing. There was a discussion on surface dressing with a comment that they should be chasing utility companies to make good which apparently hasn't been happening. A discussion had taken place on new academies, two thirds in Kent had switched but 400 primary schools hadn't. With regard to road tax on foreign vehicles entering the UK, we were told that the Treasury had pocketed this money, none was coming to Kent. The general feeling of the attendees at the seminar was that Kent Highways are not spending enough on the roads, no comment could be made on any savings as no figures were given and that tax on roads should be spent on the roads and not on such things as health care for the elderly. Streetlights were discussed and LEDs could halve the energy and maintenance costs. Parishes were told they could update and use KCC contractors on the same contractual costs. The payback time is estimated at 8 years. With regard to soft landscaping and verge and grass cutting, they are making cutbacks of 50%. They want the parishes to take on the work with very little help with funding. He invited questions.

Cllr. Cook suggested we should look at changing to LEDs – not only for the cost savings but energy consumption and environmental impact. Responding to a question from Cllr. Hall, Cllr. Rook confirmed that the issue of HGVs using car sat navs and not HGV sat navs had not been raised. He also confirmed to Cllr. Swann that devolvement of highways issues from KCC to TWBC had also not been raised. Cllr. Fermor stated that LEDs had an adverse effect on wildlife and their habitats. She asked whether there had been any results from the survey when the lights had been switched off. Cllr. Kemp stated that the switch off had been a national raft of pilot schemes and he agreed that LEDs were problematic for wildlife. Cllr. Rook confirmed that all points will be raised at the next Environmental Management Committee together with the Speedwatch equipment.

Cllr. Veitch stated that she had not seen any info on the recent survey or any report on the switch off. Cllr. Hall stated that there were consultation forms in the Library. The Clerk confirmed we had carried info on the consultation period on the Parish Website and on the noticeboards.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

145: Cllr. Smith in the absence of Cllr. Warne referred to the report of the meeting held on the 2nd November which had been circulated together with the Terms of Reference. He mentioned that the Committee needed Clerk's support. Matt Warne had taken the Minutes and had agreed to be Treasurer. Cllr. Swann stated that clerking had been discussed at the last Policy & Resources Committee. Cllr. Smith went through the report and referred to the actions points. Cllr. Swann stated that it was good to see so much involvement from the community. Cllr. Kemp confirmed that the membership was now seven public and five council members with the contribution from the public being energetic and passionate. Cllr. Bunyan confirmed that she had attended the last meeting which was a good meeting but as there were now more public members she would now stand down. Cllr. Hall stated that from her experience the meetings were not usually clerked by parish clerks but by volunteers with a small honorarium. Cllr. Smith confirmed that this had been discussed but no-one had volunteered and the Committee would have to buy in a resource if the Parish Council could not help, so the first port of call was to ask the Parish Council. Cllr. Veitch referred to the Policy & Resources Minutes where it was agreed that the Parish Council could help in the first instance from next year but this could be outsourced if and when it was deemed necessary. Cllr. Hall stated that the Committee also needed a website and webmaster. Some members may have computer skills. Cllr. Smith stated that this had been taken on board. There was a public membership vacancy should anyone have specific skills they can bring to the table. He read out a statement from Cllr. Warne on the responses given when the steering group had been asked why they were keen to be involved which will be filed with the Minutes. The next meeting is on the 28th November at 6.45 pm when another consultant will be making a presentation – all councillors are invited, together with an Open Meeting on the 5th December. Cllr. Smith then proposed adoption of the report. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed. The Terms of Reference are also ratified as part of the report.

CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

146: Cllr. Bunyan stated that there was a meeting at the end of the month.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

147: Cllr. Veitch stated that the next meeting is on the 23rd November and on the agenda are queries regarding the TWBC housing targets and Highways and Transportation issues.

ACTION WITH COMMUNITIES IN RURAL KENT:

148: There was nothing to report.

CLERKS REPORT:

149: The Clerk reported that the public conveniences are still closed and unlikely to be opened in the near future. Cllr. Cook reported that the toilets in the Co-op are also out of order. Cllr. Veitch reminded Members that the closure is due to vandalism, there have been seven new doors put on this year. Cllr. Fermor stated that the mosaic seat is also suffering from vandalism.

CORRESPONDENCE:

150: There was no correspondence which needed reporting this month.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

151: Cllr. Veitch mentioned the Mayors Annual Toy Appeal. The toys can be left in the Information Centre.

152: Cllr. Veitch referred to the pressure with unaccompanied children coming to Kent and the Appledore Centre in Swattenden Lane has confirmed that there is no increase to their numbers, a centre at Croydon is being used. Cllr. Bunyan suggested that the numbers have dropped dramatically; there are 1,000 in the County but this is not rising.

153: Cllr. Rook presented two framed photographs of his visit to Ilkley Moor for the unveiling of the plaque on the Well House.

154: Cllr. Cook was delighted that the Council has offered to help with the temporary relocation of the Cobblers Shop into our Car Park.

155: Cllr. Bunyan informed Members that former councillor David Summers had suffered a heart attack and perhaps we could send a card. The Clerk confirmed that David had visited the office yesterday and looked very well and was back walking his dog.

156: Cllr. Holmes referred to the Hop Picker's Line and the way marking board is now in situ at Paddock Wood Station. Invitations have been sent out to parish chairmen and vice chairman to attend the unveiling.

157: Cllr. Holmes mentioned the sorry state of the former Windmill Inn. The Clerk volunteered to write to the owners.

158: Cllr. Holmes asked for an update on the civic amenity refuse lorry rota following the recent fire at Longfield tip. The Clerk advised that the lorry will be at Swifts View this Saturday but may not be there for the full 3 hours as the Sevenoaks tip has been opened up especially on a Saturday but closes at 3 p m.

159: Cllr. Smith invited all councillors along to the Christmas drinks evening at St. George's Institute on the 16th December when carol singers will be in attendance.

160: Cllr. Hall confirmed that she had also received an invitation to the way marking event at Paddock Wood. With regard to the former Windmill Inn she suggested that S215 might be able to be instigated, she would make enquiries.

161: Cllr. Kemp gave an update on the Crane Valley Land Trust which are now on the third and final stage. Their lead consultant has given them a clean bill of health. They have had good support from the general public and have three new members which includes a lawyer and someone with a corporate finance background. There is a substantial pot of money available together with loans and £60m in a national pot. They now need to get a business plan put together. Cllr. Veitch reminded Members that this is an item on the January meeting in order for the Trust to be able to put together their presentation and to invite key Borough officers to the meeting.

162: Cllr. Swann asked whether the six month review of the civic amenity refuse vehicle rota had taken place. He mentioned that by reducing the garden waste collection that more would go to landfill. Cllr. Veitch confirmed that she would raise the question at the next Chairman's meeting. Cllr. Hall stated that there was a definitely reduced service at Goudhurst.

163: Cllr. Hall giving her Borough Council report, stated that she had nothing to report, she had missed some meetings as she had been unwell.

The Chairman then closed the meeting to allow members of the public to speak.

A parishioner asked whether there was any set format or procedures for the budget and precept. The Clerk confirmed that if the parishioner would like to make an appointment she would make available all the papers on the Audit & Governance Act.

Cllr. Smith responded to a query from a parishioner regarding the closure of the public toilet and Borough funding for alternatives. The Borough Council can make funding available to businesses who open their toilets for the public i.e. public houses and cinemas.

The Chairman then re-opened the meeting.

164: The Chairman read out the necessary resolution to close the meeting to the general public to enable a confidential item to be discussed. Cllr. Cook seconded the resolution and it was unanimously agreed.

