

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 10th February 2014 at The Memorial Hall at 20.00 hours, pursuant to notice

Present: Cllr Reynolds (Chairman), Cllr Barker, Cllr Butler-Graham, Cllr Cook & Cllr Thomas (Vice-Chair)

In Attendance: Fiona Chalk – Clerk, 4 members of the public

018/14 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr North, Cllr Holden and Cllr Rook, their apologies were accepted.

The meeting was closed for parishioners' questions.

019/14 Parishioners' questions

The Chairman of BACS advised his members felt that the awareness of what was happening regarding the planning application for the village hall car park, was not satisfactory. There had been little mention of it in the HMT minutes, only October and December's minutes mentioned it. Also, the first meeting at which it was discussed, was closed to the public for this particular item – why was it deemed commercially sensitive? The application states that residents have been consulted and that Benenden Village Hall Management committee supports the application. He also alleged that the Village Hall car park size will be a 250% increase from 890 to 2040 sq ft.

He was advised that KCC have been asked to correct their statement – it should read Harmsworth Memorial Trust supports the application, not BVHMC. The application is a KCC application, not a HMT or Parish Council application and they have invited comments from the public. Until the application was formally made to KCC Planning, it was not appropriate for the Council to discuss it, hence why the application has not appeared in previous Minutes. The Chairman contacted previous objectors opposite the site to explain the changes to them. The application is a reduction of the original application and therefore no general public consultation was considered necessary. Moreover, the Council has endeavoured to inform the public about the Application via the Parish notice boards, website and email communication. He was advised that the square footage figures quoted were wrong. The question of car numbers relating to bookings was taken from a previous survey taken earlier in the year and the Clerk undertaking a car number count.

It was noted that this issue has been discussed at the Harmsworth Memorial Trust meetings which has its own considerations, separate to that of the Parish Council. It has no obligation to consult or hold public meetings, although it seeks to be as open as possible and there has been no intention of secrecy over this issue.

The meeting was re-opened.

- 020/14 Declarations of Interest**
The Chair declared his interest in providing hard landscaping for the recycling bins.
- 021/14 Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 20th January 2014**
There were no amendments, the PC resolved to accept the minutes and they were signed by the Chair.
- 022/14 Matters Arising that are not on the Agenda**
- (i) It was noted that the cost of a concrete plinth and landscaping for the recycling bins was going to cost more than anticipated. The Clerk advised she would be seeking 3 quotes and if the Chair submitted a quote, the quotes would be anonymised before being submitted to the next meeting for consideration.
 - (ii) No response has yet been received regarding the Women’s Club assisting with the WWII commemorations – they will be discussing it on 12th February at their AGM and respond. The Clerk will seek further details and costs to clean the war memorial.
 - (iii) The Clerk is taking advice on the staffing issue and will report to the next meeting in a closed session.
 - (iv) The Clerk advised that since joining Society of Local Council Clerks to undertake her Certificate, she has found the legal advice available as part of the membership package, to be very useful and therefore doesn’t believe the requirement for a further legal advice package is required at this time. She advised that legal advice is available regarding Parish Council matters only.
 - (v) The \$137 amount for the coming year was noted as £7.20
 - (vi) The Asset Group formed as a result of the Parish Plan has advised that valuations be undertaken of Parish Council and HMT assets. It was agreed no decision would be taken on the valuation of the Parish Council Assets at this time. The Clerk advised that there is an asset register with insurance valuations applied.
 - (vii) A new resident has taken up tenancy at 5 Vyvian Cottages.
- 023/14 Consider Co-optees**
Peter Davies letter of application was noted. A vote was taken after he left the room and it was resolved to appoint him as a co-opted member to the Parish Council. He was welcomed and it was noted that his knowledge of local government would be a great asset.
- 024/14 Member Councillor Grant**
It was noted that Cllr Hall wishes her £100 grant to be spent in Benenden and given to Merry and Bright. As she was not present at the meeting, further clarification could not be sought so the matter will be carried to the next meeting.
- 025/14 Provision of Welcome Pack**
It was noted that Ashford Borough Council advise Rolvenden of new residents. Benenden church used to welcome newcomers twice a year. It was agreed that the Welcome pack should not be run in conjunction with the Church. The Parish Plan

These minutes are not a verbatim record of the meeting, but a summary of discussion and decisions taken at the meeting.

showed that the equivalent of 60 newcomers entered the village every year. It was noted a welcome card giving direction to the local websites could be used. The Clerk added that other Clerks had raised concerns over the amount of work required to keep such a pack up-to-date and the costs of involved in producing such a pack. It was agreed that Cllrs Butler-Graham and Thomas investigate the matter further.

026/14 Report by Cllr Rook, Holden and Hall

The Cllrs were not present.

027/14 Reports by Clerk/Chairman/Cllrs

- (i) Primary School – Cllr Thomas circulated the minutes of the meeting with Mr Gough and Mr Farquharson which included an agreement by them to look at alternative funding streams. They were aware of the needs of the school and acknowledged that the buildings are not acceptable. With Mr Gove’s current policy of public and LA schools becoming more alike, there may be opportunity to push for more funding from this point of view. It was agreed the letter could be published on the website. It was agreed that an alternative more hard line approach could be adopted if nothing comes out of the current situation. Cllr Butler-Graham will distribute the Meeting notes to the PC database.
- (ii) KALC – nothing new to report
- (iii) Highways Committee. It was resolved that this new committee be merged with the planning committee and the Clerk will present new Terms of Reference to the next meeting.
- (iv) Streetcruizer – the amended agreement has been received and the agreement was signed.
- (v) Speedwatch – One session has taken place at Iden Green but there is still a lack of Benenden residents offering to take part in the Benenden session. The equipment was reported as damaged by the Cranbrook Clerk went returned but users reported it was like this when received. Every attempt had been made to clean and dry the equipment following its use in horrendous weather conditions.
- (vi) Playground – the repairs to the Benenden playground have been carried out.
- (vii) Website – It was proposed that further information about village activities and events are added to the website, although they already feature on the existing village website. It was noted that the village website was not very easy to navigate and the Parish Council website already had a calendar that could be used. It was noted that the Clerk had been assigned extra time to keep facebook and the website updated. The Clerk advised that she was using these hours to keep the website up-to-date with Council and LA documentation and information such as minutes, policies, consultation documents, LA events, highways and planning details and budget information etc. rather than village social events. The Clerk recommended that the Parish Council consult with residents as to what they would like to see on the website as they are the main users. It was resolved that Cllr Thomas would take on the role of keeping the calendar on the website up – to-date with village events. It was suggested that the parish magazine be put on the website but as it is charged for, this would not be acceptable. It

was noted that the Parish Plan has formed a communications committee and further communication options could be considered.

028/14 Planning Report

- (i) TWBC Planning Decisions to date and current appeals were noted
- (ii) The following applications were considered:

14/00138	Clevalands, The Street, Benenden	Tree in conservation area notification	No action required
14/00115	Yew Tree Cottage, Mill Street, Benenden	Trees in conservation area notification	No action required
Kcc/tw/0370/2013	Village Hall, The Street, Benenden	Extension to car park including resurfacing, landscaping and relocation of existing equipped play area –	no comment as conflict of interest
Kcc/tw/0368/2013	Land south of Rolvenden Road, Benenden, Kent	Section 73 application to vary condition 2, 17 and 18 of tw/12/1442	no comment as conflict of interest
14/00100	Copper Beeches Walkhurst Road Benenden Cranbrook Kent TN17 4AP	Construction of grass tennis court with green chain link fencing around it, swimming pool and decking, replacement shed with air source pump, demolition of dilapidated garage	Recommend for approval
13/03586	5 Medway Cottages, Woodcock Lane, Benenden, Cranbrook, Kent	Side extension	Recommend for approval

029/14 Financial Report

- (i) The monthly finance report and payment schedule were noted. The PC resolved to accept the finance report. The invoice for SOSWeb is to be queried.

030/14 Training and Development

Cllr Thomas and the Clerk asked to attend the Planning Conference at a cost of £72.00 ea. It was resolved that they could attend.

031/14

Consultations

It was resolved that no comment would be made regarding the Green Infrastructure Plan and Noise and Vibration Supplementary Planning documents or the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan.

032/14

Correspondence Report

The report was noted.

033/14

Items for Future consideration

Steve Whitbread from TWBC will be invited to give a 30 minute presentation and the meeting will start 30 minutes early.

On Friday 21st, there is to be a tree planting event at the Swattenden Centre.

It was resolved that the Annual Parish meeting will take place on 28th April at 7.30pm in the village hall and the Annual Council meeting will take place on 2nd June in the Memorial hall.

A report on Section 137 spending to date will be presented to the next meeting under Financial information.

The meeting closed at 9.20p.m.