

PARISH COUNCIL OF BENENDEN

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Monday 24th, June 2013 in the Iden Green Pavilion at 20.00 hours, pursuant to notice

Present: Cllr Reynolds, Cllr Beattie, Cllr Butler-Graham, Cllr Cook, Cllr Walden, Cllr Thomas, Cllr North, Cllr Barker

In Attendance: Fiona Chalk – Clerk, Cllr Hall, Cllr Holden, Cllr Rook

101/13 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies. The Chair welcomed the new Clerk and Cllr Cook to their first meeting, and thanked Cllrs Hall, Holden and Rook for attending.

The meeting was closed for parishioners questions.

102/13 PARISIONERS QUESTIONS

There were no questions. The meeting was re-opened.

103/13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair declared his interest in item 13 – office furniture.

104/13 MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20 MAY 2013

The minutes were agreed as a true and accurate record of the meeting and were duly signed.

105/13 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED BY ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

106/13 APPROVE 2012-13 ACCOUNTS AND SIGN THE ANNUAL RETURN

The accounts were unanimously approved. The Council answered the Annual Governance Statement as follows:

1. We approved the accounting statements prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit regulations and proper practices – YES
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness – YES
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or on its finances – YES
4. We provide proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the council accounting records and control systems.

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

7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the council and, where appropriate have included them in accounting statements.
9. Trust Funds – in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our responsibility in relation to the accountability for the funds/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.

Thanks were expressed to Tom Dawlings for his efforts in auditing the accounts.

107/13

REVIEW AND APPROVE FINANCIAL REGULATIONS AND STANDING ORDERS

The Financial Regulations were approved subject to an amendment to 3.4 limit of spend from £100 to £250.

The Standing Orders were approved subject to an amendment to 4xvii. Limit of spend from £100 to £250

108/13

REVIEW AND APPROVE TERMS OF REFERENCE OF PLANNING COMMITTEE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

It was agreed the layout of these Terms of Reference to be standardised and brought before the next meeting for approval.

Clerk to action

109/13

TO RECEIVE AN UPDATE ON THE PARISH PLAN

The Council expressed their thanks to the team for all their efforts in producing the Plan. It was noted that the likely expenditure on the plan would not exceed £1026, this is printing and for the postage costs of return. The Council confirmed it has added £1,000 to the budget for this year and next. Cllrs asked about analysis costs, and where informed that the analysis was being done by volunteers. Cllrs noted that there may be further costs incurred next year in relation to printing off a report on the findings of the plan and possible costs of Hall Hire for presentation to the public of the findings. Cllrs agreed these are acceptable costs.

110/13

SPEEDWATCH

Cllr Walden attended a meeting at Cranbrook to discuss 5 parishes jointly buying one fifth usage each of Cranbrook Parish Council's speed camera. This would be a one off-payment giving Benenden Parish Council one-fifth access to usage of the machine. This would ensure the Parish Council's insurance would cover use of the equipment. He advised the machine stores data which can be used to strengthen the Parish Council's requests to the Police and Highways for further action to be taken in the village in regard to speeding. Other parishes have found regular usage, approx. once every six weeks, has helped to reduce speeding through villages. Cllr Rook advised that approximately £100-£200 would be available in funding from the Borough Council for this project. Cllrs advised that several parishioners are willing to be trained to use the machine. Cllrs agreed to look into the costings and funding of the machine. It was proposed by Cllr Barker to defer a decision to the next meeting, Cllr Beattie seconded this proposal and all voted in favour.

Chairman/Clerk to Action

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111/13

CLERKS/CHAIRMAN/COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES REPORTS

Benenden Village School – Recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be ‘requiring improvement’ and it will be re-assessed in 12-18 months.

KALC – A report previously circulated was noted. Concern has been raised by some parishes over the issue of lost planning appeals and the poor service received from TWBC planning staff. It was noted that Planning staff are being invited to the next BPC Planning meeting and this can be discussed then. Cllr Hall was asked to check if the New Homes Bonus scheme funding is ring-fenced by TWBC.

Cllr Hall to Action

Highways – The meeting was closed. A parishioner spoke about their concern over the B2086 that had been resurfaced. The road on the north side opposite the village green was not being used and therefore not worn in, dramatically reducing it’s lifespan.

Cllr Holden referred to the Green Lane works at Dingleton Farm and the lack of work on the road down to the Green Lane. A report will be sent to TWBC and copied to the Clerk. The meeting was re-opened.

Cllr Rook to Action

Streetcruizer bus- It was noted that the bus is operating tonight with two youth workers and about 15 children present. It was noted that there had been some teething problems with lack of drivers and youth workers, but it now seemed to be working well. Cllrs agreed that during August, the bus should still arrive on Monday evenings. The Chairman advised he had volunteered to be a driver for this bus, along with some other parishioners. Cllrs expressed their thanks to Cllr Butler-Graham for organising the bus facility.

Cllr Butler-Graham to Action

Website – The go live date for the new website is noted for 8th July 2013. It was agreed uniform photos of all Cllrs should be taken to be displayed.

Cllr Butler-Graham to Action

Office Furniture – the details for the contract on the photocopier are yet to be ascertained. The internet account is in the process of being transferred from Waitrose to BT. The Chairman left the room. The Clerk advised that she had sought prices on 2x3drawer filing units and that those sourced from the Chairman’s company offered the best value for money and were adequate to replace the broken and overflowing ones in the Community Office. It was unanimously agreed to purchase 2 x3drawer filing units at a cost of £135 ea, including hanging files.

Footpaths – The issue of dog access at stiles on some village footpaths needs to be followed up with Jim Hyde the Council’s footpaths volunteer.

Clerk to Action

Almshouse Trustees – Cllrs unanimously confirmed the appointment of two new trustees, namely Mr Colin Hayman and Mr Blair Gulland.

Clerk to Action

112/13

IDEN GREEN NOTICE BOARD

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Cllrs agreed that the current positioning of the noticeboard is very awkward as cars park immediately in front of it in the layby. It was therefore unanimously agreed to move it to the side of the layby and have it refurbished as well, for a cost of £210.

Clerk to Action

113/13 PLANNING REPORT

It was agreed to invite TWBC Democratic and Planning Service representatives to the next planning meeting on July 11th.

Planning Decisions Report was noted.

Planning Applications Report was noted and the following recommendations were unanimously agreed:

Weavers Cottage – recommend for approval
Greenacres – remain neutral.

Clerk to Action

114/13 FINANCIAL REPORT

The monthly bank reconciliations and transactions list for April and May were unanimously approved.

It was unanimously agreed that the Parish should renew its subscription for ACRK but not for CPRE.

The Parish Plan costs were noted (see minute 109/13)

Clerk to Action

115/13 CORRESPONDENCE LIST

Cllrs noted the list and it was agreed that the Clerk circulate the list every week to all Cllrs.

License application – it was agreed to recommend for approval the licence for the ‘In the Woods Festival’.

Clerk to Action

116/13 ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION

It was agreed that the topic of First Aiders and defibrillators in the village should be added to the next Agenda. Cllr Walden agreed to see about sourcing defibrillators.

Cllr Walden/Clerk to Action

117/13 STAFFING

It was agreed that the Chair would look into pension contribution costs for the Clerk. It was unanimously agreed for the Clerk’s contract to include training provision and this was agreed at an annual amount of £500, to be repaid by the Clerk should she resign from the post within 12 months of receipt of training. Contract to be issued to the Clerk forthwith.

Chair/Vice-Chair/Clerk to Action

118/13 WARD COUNCILLORS REPORTS

Cllr Hall stated that the Eastern and Western Area Planning Committees would be merged. Cllrs expressed their concern at this arrangement as it was felt rural knowledge may be lost.

Cllr Holden:

- questioned the use of public funds, as raised by Cllrs, over the Green Lane at Dingledden Farm.
- He agreed to speak further with WRAP about the Streetcruizer bus to ensure a smooth continuation of service.
- He advised that there is to be a meeting with the Head of KCC regarding the proposed new school for Benenden and suggested the Parish Council may wish to send a letter to him to take to the meeting, which stated the Council's position regarding the proposed school.

Chair/Vice Chair to Action

Cllr Rook advised the following:

- The George Public House in Benenden has a defibrillator.
- He expressed how impressed he was with the Parish Plan work.
- The Cranbrook Car Parks have been leased by the Parish Council and so parking will remain free of charge for the public for at least the next ten years.
- A new Chapel is to be built at the Crematorium in Tunbridge Wells.
- There have been problems with noise in the West of the borough, from planes at Gatwick airport.
- He agreed to look into the sale of land at Cherryfields and Leybourne Dell by TWBC. Cllrs agreed to send a letter to TWBC stating its views on this matter.

Chairman/Cllr Rook to Action

119/13

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th July 2013 at the Memorial Hall, Benenden at 8.00pm.

The meeting closed at 9.50 p.m.