

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 21ST JUNE 2004

PRESENT: Cllrs: Bearman, Boyle, Mrs Cresswell (Chairman), Cresswell, Mrs Curry, Gardner, Poole, Shead, Street & Whiteside

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs K Bell (Clerk), Mr T Fryer & Mr G Court (Item 3b), Mr P Morgan (Item 8c)

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Crawford (Prior Commitment)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs. Mrs Cresswell and Cresswell declared an interest in item 8c.

2. QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS

There were none

3. PARISH COUNCIL

a. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th, May 04, which had been copied to members, were agreed and signed as a true record of the proceedings.

b. Matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Minute 11b(i), Youth Club

It was reported that no current user of the Sports Hall was able to switch from the Sports Hall to the Village Hall. It appeared therefore that a long-term solution would be the best course of action. With this in mind the issue would be discussed at the next meeting of the PC, in advance of which informal enquiries would be made with local landowners to ascertain whether land could be purchased to be used as a football pitch and TMBC in order to establish whether it would be possible to install a mobile unit on the land adjacent to Church Lane which could be used as a permanent youth facility. It was noted that should the PC support a permanent youth facility then it would require time, commitment and fundraising and the Youth Club would be expected to work in partnership with the PC. The Youth Club would also have to prove its long-term sustainability. It was noted that the issue would be discussed at the Joint Meeting of the PC & Committee of Sports Hall & Playing Field Management.

Minute 11b (iii), Footpath Maps

The Clerk reported that she was liaising with Ordnance Survey and that KCC had indicated that they still might be able to supply a display map this financial year.

Minute 11b (iv), Hedge Planting

It was reported that a letter had been received from TMBC's Chief Executive in which he confirmed that no funding would be available during 2004/05 with which to complete the project.

It was reported that a letter had been received from the Primary School thanking the PC for contributing towards the fence. Also received was a thank you poster of the School Council.

Minute 11b (v), Internal Audit

Cllr. Cresswell asked whether the valuation in respect of the war memorial had been received. The Clerk stated that she would pursue the matter and that as soon as the valuation had been received she would obtain an insurance quotation for member's consideration at a future meeting.

Minute 11b (viii), Dog Byelaws

The Clerk reported that having made enquiries it had been established that TMBC did not have any dog control byelaws relating specifically to parishes. However, the adopted Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act applied throughout the borough and required a person in charge of a dog to clear up if it fouled designated land. Nevertheless, there were 3 types of byelaw available to parishes, which were:

Dogs on Leads

Would mean that no person in charge of a dog could without reasonable excuse permit a dog to enter or remain in the grounds unless the dog was on a lead and restrained from behaviour giving reasonable grounds for annoyance. An officer of the council or any constable might remove any offender from the grounds. Maximum penalty for offenders would be £500.

The byelaw could be applied to most PC owned land and was particularly appropriate for places where loose dogs might cause a nuisance such as the Playing Fields. It was noted that the application of the byelaw would likely to be considered unreasonable if there were no alternative areas locally where dogs could be exercised off the lead and there might be major opposition to applying the byelaw in areas where large numbers of dog owners had become accustomed to allowing their dogs to exercise off the lead.

Prohibiting dogs from the grounds

Would mean that no person in charge of a dog could without reasonable excuse permit a dog to enter or remain in the grounds. An officer of the council or any constable might require a person in charge of a dog, which had entered the grounds to remove the dog from the grounds. Maximum penalty for offenders would be £500.

The byelaw could be suitable for enclosed children's play areas. The byelaw would not only prevent stray dogs from entering but it would also provide a physical barrier and make it clear where a ban area was. It was noted that the application of the byelaw would likely to be considered unreasonable if there were no alternative areas locally where dogs could be exercised freely and there might be major opposition to applying the byelaw to an area where large numbers of dog owners were used to taking their dogs.

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** that the Clerk would prepare draft byelaws for 'dogs on leads' and 'prohibiting dogs from grounds' for members consideration at the next meeting of the PC.

Minute 11b (ix), Bonfire Byelaws

It was reported that TMBC had advised that:

- They did not have byelaws & did not feel they would be necessary at parish level as they would be unenforceable.
- If bonfires caused a nuisance then the recommended action would be to contact Environmental Health who could then take action via the environmental and nuisance route.
- There was no specified time when a bonfire could be lit
- Good neighbourness should be followed
- Advice was contained within the informative leaflets, which the PC had received.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that an article would be put in the Parish Magazine promoting good practice and no further action would be taken.

c. Parish Council Website

Cllrs. Poole & Street presented for members consideration two additional quotations from website designers. They were:

Quercus Graphics

£500 payable once the site went live and was working to the PCs satisfaction, plus considerable additional costs should the PC wish the site to be database driven. It was noted that Quercus Graphics had designed the website for Hadlow PC.

Marc Summers Website Development

£2,205 fully inclusive and to the PCs precise specification. It was noted that he had carried out work for the District Councils of Tonbridge and Malling and Canterbury.

On the basis of the reputation for similar work carried out by Marc Summers Website Development and in accordance with the principles of Best Value, it was proposed by Cllr. Street, seconded by Cllr. Poole and **RESOLVED** that the contract for developing the website for East Peckham PC would be awarded to Marc Summers.

The Clerk informed members that the amount allocated in reserves towards the project was £1,820 and that as the website would cost £2,205 there would be a shortfall of £385.

It was proposed by Cllr. Boyle, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Curry and **RESOLVED** that £385 would be allocated from the 2004/05 contingency fund towards the project.

Cllrs. Poole & Street were thanked for their hard work.

d. Members Allowances

In 2001 the PC agreed that members would not claim allowances. With effect from 1.4.04, members became entitled to claim allowances and in view of the fact that not all current members were party to the earlier decision, the Clerk wanted to ascertain whether the decision taken in 2001 remained relevant.

Members were informed that allowances were set by a Parish Remuneration Panel (PRP) set up by District Councils. Having enquired with TMBC, it was established that TMBC did not have a PRP but would set one up if PCs asked for it and the PCs would then share the costs of the panel.

NALC & KAPC had advised that if there was no panel then the PC could set its own allowances and these were published. If the PC did elect to receive allowances then individual members could elect in writing to forgo the allowance. Allowances would be subject to the PAYE system.

The Clerk advised that as a guide Mid Sussex DC had a PRP which had recommended that Cllrs. Receive £100 per 500 electors and the chairman receive £150 per 500 electors.

Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Poole seconded by Cllr. Mrs Curry and **RESOLVED** that as a collective body the Parish Councillors would not claim allowances and that the decision would be subject to an annual review.

e. Annual Review of Risk Assessment

It was **RESOLVED** that no amendments were required.

f. Annual Review of PC Land & Assets

It was **RESOLVED** that the document as prepared by the Clerk be noted.

g. Parish Emergency Plan

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that:

- (i) The Clerk would be notified of any amendments to the draft documentation by 5th July.
- (ii) The amendments would be incorporated into revised documentation, which would be copied to members.
- (iii) The matter would receive further consideration at the next meeting of the PC.

h. PC Newsletter

Following a discussion it was **RESOLVED** that a PC newsletter would be placed on hold and considered in the future should the PC decide to go for QCS.

4. PLANNING COMMITTEE

a. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 10th May & 14th June, which had been copied to members, were approved.

b. Planning applications

RESOLVED to comment as follows to TMBC:

TM/04/01679/FL Alterations to redundant barn to provide new dwelling at Strettitt Farm, 7 Snoll Hatch Road, East Peckham
AGREED

TM/04/01812/LB Plant room at The Well House, 147 Hale Street, East Peckham
AGREED

5. TMBC

a. Report of Borough Councillors

There was no report

b. Parish Partnership Panel

- The minutes of the meeting held on 26th May 04 were noted
- The Green Waste Scheme would be extended to include 5000 properties in Hadlow, Aylesford, Offham & West Malling
- TMBC was unable to extend the range of seminars, which had been held on planning & highways issues and had suggested that KAPC might be the best forum to arrange further seminars.
- The next meeting would be held on 27th July. There were no items to submit for the agenda

c. Financial Arrangements with Parish & Town Councils

It was reported that following a review, the arrangements would remain unchanged with the exception that the categories of activity eligible for revenue and capital grant aid would be extended to include projects covering street scene, crime & disorder reduction, drug & alcohol abuse reduction and anti social behaviour reduction. Members were of the opinion that this change would widen the PCs choice of projects and would fit in with both Parish and Borough priorities.

6. GROUPS & ORGANISATIONS

a. Flooding

(i) Multi Agency Steering Committee

Cllrs. Poole & Whiteside reported that the next meeting was due to be held on 22nd July and that the result of the bid to DEFRA had not yet been confirmed.

(ii) Emergency Planning Group

Cllr. Poole reported that work on the Parish Emergency Plan continued.

(iii) **Correspondence from Sir J Stanley MP**

It was reported that a letter had been received from Sir Stanley MP in which he had enclosed a copy of his recent press notice regarding the EP Flood Relief Scheme and copies of his latest correspondence with the SoS for DEFRA, Margaret Beckett MP.

b. **Committee of Sports Hall & Playing Field Management**

It was reported that the current treasurer had resigned and that a replacement would be appointed. Members were reminded that the Joint Meeting would take place on 12th July at 1930 hours

c. **Village Design Statement (VDS)**

Members were informed that two years hard work had gone into the project by the VDS Team and that the VDS Team felt that they had achieved as much as they could. Rather than waste two years hard work which was carried out by residents, it was **RESOLVED** that a Focus Group would be established with the aim of publishing the VDS by the end of the year. The Focus Group would comprise of Cllrs. Boyle, Mrs Cresswell, Gardner and Whiteside, the Clerk and a member of the VDS Team.

d. **Community & Police Working Group**

Cllr. Street drew attention to the following:

- Recent crime incidents including the ram raid at the Village Stores and the theft of plants from the Merry Boys
- Youth vandalism was the biggest issue of concern for the Group.
- The next meeting would be held on 1st July.

e. **East Peckham Primary School: Report of PC School Governor**

Mrs Boyle was unable to attend the meeting but had sent a written report in which she reported that the school was out of special measures and making good progress.

7. **CORRESPONDENCE**

It was reported that the following items had been received:

- a. **Local Councils Update:** May/June 04, Issues 55 & 56
- b. **Hospice in the Weald:** Hospice News, Summer 04
- c. **TMBC:**
 - (i) Activate, Details of summer activities for 5 – 16 year olds
 - (ii) Here & Now (3 copies)
- d. **Wicksteed Leisure:** Product Information (passed to Cllr. Cresswell)
- e. **SLCC:** The Clerk
- f. **Clerks & Councils Direct**
- g. **MK Water:** Final Business Plan 2005 – 2010
- h. **Speedy Space:** Product Information
- i. **Emergency Planning Society:**
 - (i) Blueprint Publication, Summer 2004 (passed to Cllr. Poole)
 - (ii) Details of AGM to be held in Belfast on 21st June 04
- j. **Shaw & Sons Limited:** Product Information
- k. **KAPC:**
 - (i) Parish News, May 2004 – copied to members
 - (ii) Kent Volunteers Awards 2004 - Details received for information
 - (iii) Cllrs. Information Day 17th July 04: Details received for information
 - (iv) Area Committee: Details received of meeting to be held on 24th June 04
- l. **NALC:** DisExtra, Issue 582, June 04 – Received for information

8. FINANCE

a. 2003/04 Accounts

The unaudited accounts for the year ended 31st March 2004 had been copied and presented to members. Attention was drawn to the following:

- (i) The accounts had been prepared in accordance with the guidelines expressed in the Governance & Accountability in Local Councils in England & Wales – A Practitioners Guide, the Accounts & Audit Regulations 1996 (As amended) and CIPFA guidelines
- (ii) As the PCs expenditure was in the range £50,000 - £100,000 the accounts could be prepared on the more simplistic receipts and payments basis however in order for year on year comparisons to be made the accounts had been prepared on an income and expenditure basis.
- (iii) In January 04, members agreed a precept of £47,419. This was £1,781 down on the precept for 2003/04, which was £49,200.
- (iv) Fund balances at 31.3.04 amounted to £49,886.22, less the earmarked reserves of £7,948.58, the reality was that the PC held in reserve at 31.3.2004 the sum of £41,937.64; this was approximately 88% of the PCs precept level. It was noted that although DA had advised in May 2001 that the reserve level should equal the precept level, KAPC had suggested between 75% - 100% should be held in reserve and therefore the actual reserve level is between the two recommendations and represented a prudent and cautious approach towards public finances.
- (v) The audit date had been set as 2nd August and arrangements would be made for the External Internal Audit to be carried out and for the required notices advertising that the accounts were available for public inspection would be posted on the PC notice board.

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the accounts for the financial year 2003/04 be approved and that Cllr. Mrs Cresswell and the Clerk as RFO would complete the Annual Return.

The Clerk read out the statements contained in the Statement of Assurance. Members responded positively to all statements, following which it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Mrs Cresswell and the Clerk would complete the Statement of Assurance.

b. Bank Reconciliation as at 31.5.04 - noted

c. S136 Grants to Halls & Open Spaces 2004/2005

The Clerk advised members that the amount available to allocate was £5,380 and that requests for funding had been received in respect of the following:

East Peckham Methodist Church

£708.00 Towards new flooring in the kitchen and toilets of Curran Hall.

East Peckham Primary School

£856.00 - £1000.00 To complete the hedge around the perimeter of the school playing fields and the East Peckham Playing Fields, which had been started by TMBC.

Committee of Sports Hall and Playing Field Management

£2,500.00 Towards the purchase of a piece of modular play equipment for the children's play area.

Members were informed that the Village Hall Management Committee had also been invited to submit an application for funding but no request had been received.

Following a discussion, it was proposed by Cllr. Boyle, seconded by Cllr. Mrs Curry and **RESOLVED** that funding would be awarded to the three projects as detailed above.

It was further **RESOLVED** that if no further demands were made on the remainder of the fund allocation, i.e. £1,622 then members would consider allocating the remainder of the S136 Grants to Halls & Open Spaces 2004/05 fund to the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership so that it could be put towards the Medway Valley Walk Project.

d. Medway Valley Walk Project

It was reported that following the meeting or the Planning Committee, which was held on 14.6.04 no new information, had been received.

e. Financial Transactions

The following were approved

Receipts since Parish Council on 10.5.04

20.5.04	Allotments	£13.88
20.5.04	TMBC S136 1 st half	£4,780.00
11.6.04	EP Stores Centenary Book Sales	£22.50
Total receipts		£4,816.38

Automated Payments since Parish Council on 10.5.04

22.5.04	*British Gas – Sports Hall Energy	£71.00
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The following payments were approved (incl. VAT where applicable)

Mrs K Bell	June 04 Salary & exps	674.12Chq2116/2118
Ditton Electrical Ltd	*Sports Hall Electrical work	£3,521.42Chq2117
Inland Revenue	Salary deductions Apr/June	£363.68Chq2119
SweepClean	(Kent) May 04 Litter Clear (S137)	£176.26Chq2120
SEEBOARD	Streetlight Maint June 04	£306.58Chq2121
BT	Parish Office	£41.54Chq2122
Kent Grassland Svcs	*Playing Field Maintenance	£399.50Chq2123
Scribe 2000 Ltd	Annual License Renewal	£245.00Chq2124
Zurich Municipal	*Insurance Seminar	£70.50Chq2125
Hills Office Services	Office Equipment	£570.00Chq2126
SMP Playgrounds	Chatroom	£3,172.50Chq2127
KCC (KCS)	Stationery £10.69	
	*Sports Hall £105.81	£116.50Chq2128
Mr N Stephens	Allotment land rent 04/05	£30.00Chq2129
SLCC	Publications	£46.50Chq2130/2132
KAPC	Clerks AQA Block 2 seminar	£30.00Chq2131
Seeboard Energy	Street light energy charge	£166.16Chq2132
TOTAL		£9,930.26

*Payments charged to the Committee of Management grant

9. MATTERS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Cllr. Boyle

Drew attention to the wooden seats in the children's play area, which were unusable. Cllr. Cresswell (Chairman of the Sports Hall & Playing Field Management) stated that these were to be replaced.

Cllr. Poole

Drew attention to the gate in the children's play area, which had a faulty shutting mechanism. Cllr. Cresswell (Chairman of the Committee of Sports Hall & Playing Field Management) stated that the matter was in hand.

The Clerk

Drew attention to a letter which had been received from Charing PC requesting the PCs assistance in distributing posters and postcards regarding the Archbishops Palace at Charing which had been chosen as the only building in Kent to appear on the BBC2 Restoration programme the prize being a £3.5 million grant to restore the building to its former glory. The posters would be placed on the village notice boards and the postcards would be distributed to the library and village stores.

10. **DATE & TIME OF NEXT MEETING:** 19th July at 1930 hours

There being no additional business the meeting closed at 20.55 hours.