

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE METHODIST OLD CHURCH HALL AT 20.12 HOURS ON MONDAY 22 JANUARY 07

PRESENT: Cllrs: Bearman, Boyle, Crowley (from item 5c) Mrs. Curry, Gardner, Gress (from item 5c), Poole, Street & Whiteside

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs. K Bell, Borough Councillor Mrs Holland, County Councillor Long & 3 members of the public

In the absence of Cllr Crawford it was **RESOLVED** that Cllr. Boyle would chair the meeting.

1. **Apologies for absence:** Received and accepted from Cllrs Crawford & Shead, Borough Councillor Rogers & the KCC Community Warden.

2. **Declarations of Interests:** Cllr Boyle declared an interest in item 12.

3. **The following verbal reports were received:**

County Councillor

County Councillor Long drew attention to the following:

- Reminded members that he had not received an application from East Peckham for a members grant
- Planning Application in respect of the School

The following items were referred to County Councillor Long

- The PC's dissatisfaction with the spreadsheet system of reporting complaints to KHS
- The PC's dissatisfaction with the EA, UMIDB & TMBC for not responding seriously to the PCs concerns. Copies of all correspondence on the issue would be forwarded to County Councillor Long.
- Concern that the waterways surrounding the Coult's Steam Dam were not being adequately maintained

Borough Councillor

Borough Councillor Mrs Holland reported that plastic recycling within the Borough was going well and that additional plastic recycling banks were being installed. It was agreed that a request would be submitted to TMBC for a plastic recycling bank to be installed in the village. Borough Councillor Mrs Holland also requested copies of the PC's recent correspondence with the EA, UMIDB & TMBC.

4. **Parishioners Question Time**

Parishioners present drew attention to the following:

- Sign post at Branbridges Road, Somerfield site – The PC had been consulted by KHS on the proposed signage and the matter was in hand
- Missing road markers in Hale Street - The matter would be referred to KHS
- Overgrown hedge in Church Lane – The matter would be referred to KHS

5. **Parish Council**

a. **To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2006**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting which had been copied to members be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

b. Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda

Minute 5b, Anti-Social Behaviour

It was reported that additional information had been received regarding the role of the soon to be appointed PCSO. Noted and copied to members.

Minute 5b, Holy Trinity War Memorial – Re-etching of names

It was reported that a quotation had not yet been received.

Minute 5b, Removal of trees and provision of replacement fencing at land adjoining the Playing Field and 28 Russett Road.

It was reported that the work was due to be carried out shortly.

Minute 5c, Festive Lighting

Attention was drawn to the following:

- The Borough Council and Hop Farm Grants had been applied for.
- The energy bill had not yet been received for payment
- The lights had been stored at the Sports Hall.
- Insurance cover had been obtained for the lights.

Minute 12c - S136 2006/07: Reallocation of Methodist Church grant from the kitchen refurbishment project to part fund security improvements

It was reported that the Methodist Church was keen to use the fund towards repairing/replacing the main entrance doors. On this basis members were happy for the kitchen refurbishment fund to be reallocated towards security improvements.

c. Co-option of new members

It was reported that two applications had been received from residents seeking co-option; these were from Mr John Crowley and Mr William Gress. Following a discussion it was proposed by Cllr Poole, seconded by Cllr Boyle and:

RESOLVED: That Mr Crowley and Mr Gress be invited to join the PC. Cllrs. Crowley and Gress then joined their new colleagues.

The Clerk handed Cllr Crowley and Gress a portfolio containing copies of the Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Code of Conduct. Cllrs. Crowley and Gress were also given a Declaration of Financial & Other Interests form for completion and return to the Borough Councils Monitoring Officer.

In order to allow the new Councillors the time to peruse the Code of Conduct, it was:

RESOLVED: That Cllrs. Crowley and Gress would not be expected to complete their Written Undertakings and Declaration of Acceptance of Office until the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Following a discussion, Cllrs. Crowley and Gress agreed to take on the following village areas:

Cllr. Crowley - The Freehold, Marvillion, Orchard Road & Crown Acres
Cllr. Gress - Whitebine, Golding & Henham Gardens

d. The Standards Board for England

It was reported that anonymous complaints had been made to the Standards Board against two former members. The nature of the complaint was that the former members did not formally tender their resignations in writing and by not doing so had paralyzed the council. The complainant did not provide support to back up the allegation and the Standards Board had decided that the former members had not breached the Code of Conduct.

e. Annual Review of Financial Regulations & Standing Orders

The Clerk reported that having made enquiries with KAPC it had been established that the Parish Councils existing documents were based upon the latest version published by NALC. Following a discussion, it was:

RESOLVED: That the documents would remain subject to continual review in order to ensure their continued accuracy.

f. Annual Meeting 2007

Following a discussion the following were confirmed:

(i) Guest Speakers

Representatives from The Hop Farm would be invited to discuss future plans and proposals.

(ii) Photograph for front cover of 2006/07 Annual Report

Cllr Street would produce a montage of events, which had been photographed in the past year.

(iii) Contributions for 2006/07 Annual Report

The deadline for the receipt of contributions was set as 19 February 07. The EPPFC Chairman was invited to submit a report for inclusion in the document.

6. Finance Committee

a. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 07

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be approved and signed as a correct record of the meeting.

b. Precept for 2007/08

RESOLVED: That the precept for 2007/08 would be £57,519

c. Matters Arising

The Clerk informed members that the supporting notes were based on a contribution of £10,000 from reserves and members had approved a £15,000 contribution. The following were noted:

(i) Based on a precept of £57,519 and a budgetary requirement of £72,519, the Parish Council should hold in reserves between £54,389 and £72,519.

(ii) A reserve level of £55,000 at year-end had been forecast.

(iii) The effect a precept of £57,519 would have on council tax charges per band would be as follows:

Band A	£28.72	Band B	£33.51
Band C	£38.30	Band D	£43.08
Band E	£52.66	Band F	£62.23
Band G	£71.81	Band H	£86.17

(iv) The precept for 2006/07 was £46,869 and the precept of £57,519, for 2007/08 represented an increase of approximately 23%.

7. Planning Committee:

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 18 December 06 and 08 January 07 which had been copied to members be **RECEIVED, NOTED & APPROVED**

8. East Peckham Playing Field Committee

a. Update on current issues

(i) KCC Small Community Grant

It was reported that KCC had confirmed that the Local Boards decision would be confirmed shortly following which a letter outlining the terms and conditions of the grant together with an acceptance form would be sent. Once the acceptance form had been completed and returned it would be passed to KCC Finance who would then release the money.

(ii) Terms of Reference & Responsibilities for the EPPFC

It was reported that work was in progress on the revised documentation

(iii) Complaint received regarding mud and weeds on paved area outside the school

Cllr. Crowley (EPPFC Chairman) confirmed that having liased with the head teacher, she had agreed that the school caretaker would periodically check and sweep the area.

(iv) Survey

It was reported that a letter had been received from the Peter Clymer Partnership confirming that no interest had been shown in the work required at the Sports Hall by local contractors. Alternative arrangements would now need to be made in order for estimates to be obtained and instructions placed with contractors for the Category A repairs to be carried out soon after 01 April 07. Mr Clymer had stressed that some of the work was of a critical nature and could not be delayed.

It was noted that the Peter Clymer Partnership had also written to Directline Structures Ltd & Opal Refurbishment thanking them for producing budgets for a new sports hall.

b. To receive report from representative

Cllr. Crowley reported and drew attention to the following:

- He was in the process of investigating possible funding opportunities for either a new build Sports Hall or funding towards the repairs of the existing building.
- The management committee were looking at alternative security arrangements but would retain the existing arrangements for the time being.
- The management committee would be replacing the gate in Russett Road.

9. Policing:

a. Community & Police Working Group

Cllr Street reported that the next meeting would be held on 25.1.07.

b. Kent Police

It was reported that a letter of introduction had been received from Justin Watts, the neighbourhood policing Team Sergeant for the Tonbridge area. Together with his team of police constables and PCSOs he was responsible for delivering neighbourhood policing to the village.

10. **East Peckham Flood Risk**

It was reported that in response to the concerns of the PC, which were raised at the last meeting, letters in response, had been received from the UMIDB, the EA and TMBC. These were noted and copied to members. Following a discussion, it was

RESOLVED: That the response received was inadequate and further clarification was required. Accordingly additional comments and observations would be sent to the EA, UMIDB and TMBC.

11. **Creating an NHS fit for the future**

It was reported that Cllr Crawford had indicated that he hoped to be able to attend the discussion event held on 15 January 07. In his absence there was no report.

12. **Salvation Army Quiz Night (Cllr Boyle declared an interest in this item).**

It was reported that an invitation had been received for the PC to enter a team in the event to be held on 24.2.07. Following a discussion, it was:

RESOLVED: That members would notify the Clerk if they wished to be involved.

13. **The Methodist Church: Request received for the reduction in size of the bushes in the vicinity of the Church and Curran Hall and for the removal of the benches**

It was reported that a meeting took place recently involving church stewards and the police. One measure that had been recommended by the police was for the reduction in size of all the bushes in the vicinity of the church and Curran hall entrances and for the removal altogether of the benches. The church recognised that there would be some opposition to the loss of the benches and the trimming of the bushes but hoped that the PC would agree that any limited advantage gained by keeping the benches was outweighed by the negative impact of graffiti and rubbish which was defacing the property and surroundings. Following a discussion, it was:

RESOLVED: That the hedges would be reduced in height to 2- 3 ft and the benches would be removed altogether. The Clerk was instructed to arrange for the work to be carried out.

14. **Finance**

a. **Bank Reconciliation as at 29.12.06:** The information, which had been prepared by the Clerk and copied to members, was **APPROVED**

b. **Budgetary Control Statement as at 31.12.06:** The information, which had been prepared by the Clerk and copied to members, was **APPROVED**.

c. **2005/06 Audit**

It was reported that the 2005/06 Audit had been completed and that District Audit had certified the Annual Return for the financial year ended 31 March 2006. The report from District Audit stated *'On the basis of our review, in our opinion the information contained in the Annual Return is in accordance with the Audit Commissions requirements and no matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met'*. The Parish Council was however advised to review its level of fidelity guarantee insurance cover (currently £60,000). The Audit Commissions guidelines in this respect are balances plus half the precept. The Clerk confirmed that she was in the process of amending the fidelity cover with the council's insurers and that she had posted the conclusion of audit notice on the PC's notice board.

d. 06/07 Sports Hall & Playing Field Grant

The information, which had been prepared by the Clerk and copied to members, was **APPROVED**. It was noted that the current position with regard to the 2006/07 grant was as follows:

2006/07 Grant	£12,784
(Included £2,000 virement from contingency approved at the September PC meeting)	
Plus refunds	£3,279
Total Grant	£16,063
Less Expenditure up to 15.12.06 (excl VAT)	£15,607
Less anticipated DD payments in respect of Gas supply to 31.3.07	£342
Net Grant available to 31.3.07	£114

Following a discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the PC grant would continue to be used to pay for items such as energy supplies, security arrangements, playing field maintenance and cleaning and maintenance supplies.

e. Special Works Grants to Parish Councils

It was reported that TMBC had recommended to cabinet that a grant of £8,620 be awarded in respect of the CCTV project. The grant was subject to planning permission being obtained but initial inquiries had indicated that as the cameras would be mounted on the buildings then the installation would be covered by permitted development rights. Unfortunately the projects, submitted as priority 2 & 3 applications, namely the installation of disabled access at Holy Trinity Church and the refurbishment of the Curran Hall kitchen were unsuccessful.

f. Financial Transactions

Receipts since 18.12.06

31.12.06	Nat West – Interest	£431.30
1.1.07	BT - Wayleave	£8.82
11.1.07	EDF – Wayleave	£10.53
Total Receipts		£450.65

Payments made since 18.12.06

23.12.06	*D/D British Gas S/Hall Gas Supply (S19)	£114.00
----------	--	---------

The following payments were approved (includes VAT where applicable)

Mrs. K Bell	Clerks Salary – January 07 & expenses (S112)	£912.14 Chq 2545/2546
EDF Energy	Streetlight maintenance January 07 & repairs (S10)	£508.61 Chq 2547
Peter Clymer P/ship	Sports Hall Survey (S19) (additional instructions)	£2,474.55 Chq 2548
EP Methodist Church	Hire of Hall (Oct – Dec 06) Hire of office (S112) (Jan/ March 07)	£355.12 Chq 2549
Headland Garden Services	Churchyard maintenance St Michaels (S164)	£640.00 Chq 2550
EDF Energy	Streetlight energy (Oct – Dec 06) (S10)	£618.08 Chq 2551

-3168-

Pembury Fencing	2006/07 S136 grant to village halls – Replacement fencing at Village Hall (S136)	£2056.25 Chq 2552
CommuniCorp	Local Councils Update (S112) – subscription renewal	£65.00 Chq 2553
Sweepclean	Litter Clearing December 07 (S137)	£88.13 Chq 2554
Total		£7,717.88

*** Payments debited from PC Sports Hall grant**

15. Correspondence

It was reported that the following items had been received:

- a. Emergency Planning Society**
 - Membership Renewal Document 2007
 - Blueprint (Winter 06) The Magazine of The Emergency Planning Society (passed to Cllr. Poole)
- b. KCC: Superannuation Fund, Reports & Accounts 2006**
- c. Government Computing Magazine (January 07)**
- d. Friends of St Michaels Church: Newsletter January 07**
- e. National Statistics: Quarterly Vacancies Inquiry**
- f. TMBC**
 - Minutes of Council, Cabinet & Committee Meetings (Sept 26 – Nov 22 06)
 - Wise Up – Information on Food, Safety & Health matters
 - Food Hygiene & Health & Safety: Details of courses for 2006/07
- g. Product information received from: SMP Playgrounds (passed to EPPFC), Proludic Ltd (product information & details of parks & play seminars to be held on 24 January (passed to EPPFC), BDC Electrical Distributor & Glasdon**
- h. Christmas cards 2006: Received from Gala Lights, RBS Auditing Solutions, KAPC & Russett Homes**
- i. Local Council Review (January 07)**
- j. Kent Fire & Rescue Service**
 - Fire Service Update & Risk Management Plan survey for 2007/08
 - Fire Safety Training: Details of training course
- k. KAPC:**
 - Parish News (December 06) – copied to members
 - Summary of A Water Resource Strategy for Kent
 - Minutes of meeting of area committee held on 07 December 06
- l. Local Councils Update (December 06)**

- m. **CAB** (West Malling): Press Release regarding changes to the way in which advice is offered to the public
- n. **SLCC**
 - The Clerk (January 07)
 - Membership renewal confirmation
- o. **English Rural Housing Association:** The Bulletin (Winter 06)
- p. **Clerks & Councils Direct (January 07) & Suppliers Guide & Yearbook 2007**
- q. **Nat West:** Information on current and savings accounts
- r. **Kenward Trust:** New Life (Issue 4)

16. Matters for future Discussion

Cllr Gardner

Reported that he and Cllr Crawford had attended the presentation at The Hop Farm, which was held on 22.1.07. The presentation was very interesting and during discussions with the proprietor, Simon Hume-Kendall, the issue of moving the footpath across the Hop Farm so that it came out near the Branbridges Roundabout and pedestrians could then use the cycle path across the by-pass was raised. The proprietor of The Hop Farm confirmed that he had raised the matter with PROW and was pleased that the PC was supportive of this matter.

Cllr Boyle

Drew attention to the following:

- Informed members that Mr Tom Keily a former member of the Parish Council had passed away, it was agreed that a letter of condolence would be sent to his widow.
- Reported a faulty streetlight in Westwood Road – The matter would be referred to EDF Energy

Cllr Poole

Requested that clarification be obtained from TMBC on whether the riparian landowners were notified when hedges were cut so that they were aware that the debris resulting there from ought to be removed from the roadside and grass verges.

17. Date of Next Meeting: 19 February 2007

There being no additional business the meeting concluded at 22.12 hours.