

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL, CRANBROOK
ON THURSDAY 13TH JULY 2017**

PRESENT: Cllr. Veitch (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Fletcher, Goodchild, Hall, Hartley, Holmes, Swann and Warne. County & Borough Cllr. Holden, Borough Cllr. Dawlings.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Kemp, Smith and Borough Cllr. Hannam.

The following statement was read out:

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.

42/17: Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Cllr. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th June be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

43/17: Visit from Lawrence Hernandez – Co-Op Manager:

Apologies had been received from Lawrence Hernandez.

44/17: Community Centre Update - William Benson, TWBC Chief Exec (WB) & Jonathan White, Project Surveyor (JW).

WB stated that TWBC are about to embark on their 5 Year Plan, Cranbrook CC is one of the eight key projects they want to see delivered. Wilkes Field is the preferred site, however there are a number of issues –

Access – via the Regal car park, TWBC owned, however the Co-Op has access rights across the car park and consent is required. TWBC have given their consent and had hoped the Co-Op would too. He emailed the Co-Op's Chief Executive to seek a resolution before Christmas, a prompt response was received indicating this would be looked into. The Co-Op appointed Property agents which delayed the process. A new Chief Executive has since been appointed. The Co-Op have now advised they are willing to allow access subject to the following conditions –

- TWBC surrender a lease held over the part of the car park owned by the Co-Op
- The Co-Op would like reasonable fees to be paid
- Disturbance fee of £750 a week paid by the developer for each week the site is being accessed during construction.

A meeting with the developer has taken place and he is keen to see the project progress, however is unwilling to meet these conditions, access can if necessary be via Stone Street.

Land ownership – the developers are concerned that should the Community Centre not be delivered this may have an impact on the marketability of the enabling development. The Co-Op want the land transferred irrevocably, the developer wants assurance the project will go ahead. The land could be transferred to TWBC then passed to the Parish Council once completed.

Viability and Financial terms – TWBC have agreed to provide a financial contribution.

KCC are considering becoming an anchor tenant in the form of KCC libraries.

Consideration should be given into setting up a tripartite board made up of the three Councils – PC/TWBC/KCC. Jonathan White would lead a project team.

Questions –

- Cllr. Bunyan - Why is it more acceptable for the land to be transferred to TWBC and to whom is it more acceptable?
WB: The developer would like certainty that the project will move forward. Whether the land sits with TWBC or PC, the final outcome is the PC will own a Community Centre. JW: Having the land sit with TWBC shows the developer that we are serious in delivering a Community Centre and increases the likelihood of it being delivered. The land will be given to the PC once completed. Partial liability exemptions would need to be considered.
- Cllr. Hall – Can you explain the surrender of the lease and what the problem is with the surrender of the lease?
JW: Questions should be asked as to why the Co-Op required access and control returned.
- Cllr. Hall asked for clarification on access during construction and once finished.
WB: Confirmed once complete access would be via the Regal, however during construction it could be, if necessary, via Stone Street.
Cllr. Fletcher declared a non-pecuniary interest as he lives opposite the site and would have issues with lorries using Stone Street as an access into and out of the site.
- Cllr. Fermor – It would be dangerous for lorries to enter from Stone Street. Vehicles already mount the pavement to pass each other. Can the entrance in between the Chemist and Jewellers be considered?
David Rivers (DR) clarified that conditions prevented that entrance being used for construction access. It will be an access once construction is complete.
- Cllr. Hartley – The Co- Op are being business like, professional, competent and looking after the interests of their members and shareholders. We have got the Co-Op to thank not the KCC or TWBC that we now have a possibility of an irrevocable grant of the land.
- Cllr. Swann – Would access from Stone Street for construction apply to both the CC and enabling housing?
JW: Yes it would. There are key points needing agreement from the Co-Op; ongoing and temporary access for the building of the housing and the CC, and change of the car park. Every time TWBC have written to them they have tweaked their position, not remaining consistent.
- Cllr. Warne – Have meetings been held with Co-Op? TWBC’s letters were aggressive as opposed to the Co-Op’s that were professional. A different approach in terms of negotiation should be considered.
JW has had several meetings.
BV clarified that negotiations have been ongoing for 4 years, since October 2013.
WB: There have been no meetings with the new Chief Executive or Director of Property.
- Cllr. Swann commended the stance of TWBC and supported the suggestion of the tripartite board as the PC does not have the experience to deliver this kind of project.
- Cllr. Fairweather – Is the variation of the lease on the car park a total deal breaker on both sides? Will TWBC move their stance on the lease of the car park?
JW: The change in lease has been an additional request from the Co-Op in the last few months.
- Cllr. Goodchild thanked TWBC for their involvement and did not feel their letters were aggressive. The Co-Op had raised health and safety issues in regard to using Regal car park as an access, however it could be considered equally dangerous if lorries were to enter via Stone Street.

WB: It was assumed that these concerns were raised by people that did not know the area.

- Cllr. Clifford – Do you know which way the Co-Op are looking at this, as a housing issue first and then the Community Centre, or do they see it as one big project? Can you give some clarification on the figures given this evening?

JW: Believes the focus is on the housing issue. The £750 a week previously mentioned is the disturbance fee sought by the Co-Op from the developer and could amount in excess of £50,000.

- Cllr. Holmes - £750 a week doesn't seem to have been quantified in any shape has this been requested?

JW: The Co-Op brought in their expert and that figure was set. They are looking to achieve £150,000 although have stated they do not want any financial benefit. The next step would be to send them HoT's with a requested deadline.

- Cllr. Fletcher - there is a letter on file from the owner of the land stating he would offer the land for free to the community for the use of a community centre, received before any access issues were identified.

Meeting was closed to allow questions to be received –

- B.Cllr. Sean Holden – supported the work to date and does not believe the Co-Op are considering the disturbance caused to the community by not allowing access via the Regal car park
- B. Cllr. Dawlings – believes positive pressure needs to be applied to the Co-Op.

Questions raised by the public –

- Should a PR exercise be considered explaining the current situation?
- Sought clarification on why the Co-Op were not allowing access, is it because they do not want to give benefit to a commercial interest?

WB: There is a way forward. The Co-Op would not receive any money, however they would receive affection and loyalty from the community by supporting the project. The developer can access the site from Stone Street. It would be preferable for all concerned if the access was via the Regal. The developer needs to sign over the land to TWBC or PC.

- The marketability of the enabling housing would improve if the CC was not built. An agreement should have been given by the developer to hand the land over in 2013.
DR: The developer wants to donate the land. Lorries going through the Regal car park would be more expensive to the developer albeit more practical and preferable to the community.
- A copy of the deed of easement was provided to clarify the ownership of land and the access issue.

Meeting was re-opened.

Members were asked to state their preference for the preferred construction route into the site. Two councillors preferred access via Stone Street, one required more information, one had already declared an interest so felt unable to state a preference, the remaining nine wanted to pursue the Regal car park option.

It was agreed that the formation of a tripartite board would be further investigated with a proposal brought forward for the next meeting.

Cllr. Veitch thanked both William Benson and Jonathan White for their time.

45/17: Chairmans Report:

Cllr. Veitch thanked Cllr. Fletcher for chairing last month's Full Council.

She congratulated Cllr. Clifford and the team on the production and delivery of Parish Cake. It was being very well received.

High Weald Academy has issued a letter to its Parents and Governors regarding the funding for the new school building that has been granted by Priority Schools Programme.

Contractors will be announced on Monday 24th July. Work should start next year and completed by September 2019.

She was sure that everyone was delighted to see the sweeps back on the Windmill.

She had recently attended the Public Transport Forum and a copy of her report is available from the Clerks.

Our comments on the TWBC five year plan have been submitted and seemed to have met with general approval from chairmen of other local Parishes.

She had met with John Weeds, Headmaster Cranbrook School. He was pleased with the 12 Oxbridge offers the current leavers had received. There are 31 Year 7s due to come to the school in September. A pleasing number are from state schools.

Cranbrook in Bloom judging is taking place Wednesday 19th July. She asked everyone to help by picking up litter.

She attended the Hop Pickers Line launch of the new information board.

She expressed sadness at the recent death that had happened in Carriers Road and passed on our condolences to all affected by the tragedy. KCC had confirmed that the Nature Reserve will now be locked except during the Library opening hours.

She was aware of the strong feeling in the Town that the Public Toilets need to be re-opened.

B. Cllr. Dawlings is pursuing this with TWBC on our behalf. Discussions are ongoing.

Reports from Committees:

46/17: Policy & Resources:

Following a summary of the report of the meeting held on the 11th July. Cllr. Goodchild proposed adoption of the Minutes, seconded by Cllr. Buyan and agreed.

47/17: Planning & Preservation Management:

Cllr. Bunyan reported on further discussions with TWBC regarding the Common Road development. It was hoped that financial contribution from Countryside Properties could be secured to assist in purchasing items in the playground for older children and adults.

48/17: Burials & Properties:

Cllr. Clifford reported that the next meeting is a site visit on Tuesday 18th July at 6pm.

He encouraged anyone who would like to play the organ at the Golford Chapel to contact the Clerks.

49/17: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather advised that the large pot hole in the Regal car park had been repaired and proposed adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on the 20th June, this was seconded by Cllr. Clifford and agreed.

50/17: Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr. Warne reported that the interim report is available, this was collated from information received following the Visioning and 3 Day Design forum events. There has been a wall chart created tabling the policies. This will be presented at the public meetings on Wednesday 19th at the Vestry Hall and Saturday 22nd July at the St Georges Institute. There are seven policy headings that have been identified, task groups will be set up to gather evidence. A draft questionnaire is being compiled giving Parishioners a chance to respond.

Cllr. Warne advised there was a meeting scheduled with Kelvin Hinton – TWBC, Richard Eastham – Feria, Cllrs. Kemp and Smith, to check they are on course.

In response to Cllr. Swann's concern that the policy headings and questionnaire had not been approved by the Parish Council, Cllr. Warne stated they had been put together by the Consultant for further discussion at the public meetings.

Cllr. Veitch encouraged all Councillors to attend the forthcoming events to ensure their views are heard. Cllr. Cook suggested that a data protection statement be placed at the bottom of the questionnaire.

The Feria Urbanism quote had been received. Cllr. Warne proposed the adoption of the minutes of the meeting held on 26th June and re-iterated their approval ratified their decision to appoint Feria Urbanism for task 7 – 16. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

51/17: Cranbrook Conservation Area Committee:

Cllr. Hall reported the meeting will be held at the end of month. Cllr. Cook suggested CCAC could discuss the access routes into Wilkes Field at their next meeting.

52/17: KALC:

Cllr. Veitch reported she was due to attend a seminar on village halls.

53/17: Cranbrook Tourism Group:

Cllr. Holmes reported that the Tourism Group had requested that the Parish Council clarified their support for the Tourism Group. The Group are also lobbying for the re-opening of the public conveniences.

54/17: Clerk's Report:

The Deputy Clerk reported that crime statistics had been received for May and totalled 22 calls to Kent Police.

55/17: Correspondence:

A letter had been received from Cranbrook In Bloom thanking the Parish Council for their support for the Cranbrook Goes Nuts in May event.

56/17: Items for Information:

Cllr. Cook commended the first edition of the Parish Cake.

Cllr. Fermor suggested a letter of thanks be sent to the ladies who have been weeding in preparation of the judging of South East in Bloom on Wednesday 19th July.

Cllr. Holmes reported that the unveiling of the information board for the Hop Picker Line at Paddock Wood Station and that the unveiling of this was very well attended.

Cllr. Hartley voiced his concern at the possible disposal of the current KCC library site.

Cllr. Clifford reported that the wooden hoarding near the Community Centre site was peeling and needed to be addressed.

Cllr. Fletcher had been approached by a concerned Parishioner regarding the burning of toxic substances and reiterated that any concerns should be reported to the relevant agencies. Cllr. Goodchild wanted to congratulate the Deputy Clerk on her first solo Full Council meeting.

57/17: Report from County & Borough Councillor Sean Holden:

In response to Cllr. Hartley's concern he reported that if the library was to move there would be no diminution of the current service. There are ninety nine libraries in Kent and none have closed.

The County Council have been rated Good in a recent Ofsted inspection for the care of children.

There had been an update to the Travel Strategies covering safer travel, better environment and better health. He is currently working to stop lorries travelling down rural lanes, roads and villages.

He continues to oppose the new Theatre in Tunbridge Wells.

He reported that County Councillors have had an allowance increase of 15%, their first for eight years.

58/17: Report from Borough Councillor Tom Dawlings:

He applauded the work of the NDP, now the pressure for housing was so relentless. He stated that the Cranbrook public conveniences had more spent on them than all the public conveniences in the Borough. Alternative options have been looked into without success. TWBC are reluctant to continue to provide public conveniences in Cranbrook due repeated vandalism, however discussions are ongoing and it hoped a solution can be found. He has recently walked around the Town with the Curator of Cranbrook Museum and felt there were tourism opportunities that could be developed. He reported on the Rugby Club's progress with their planning application for new premises.

The meeting was closed.