

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2015

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Goodchild (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford,  
Holmes, Rook and Swann

**APOLOGIES:** Cllr. Veitch

**Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:**

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.

**01/15:** Cllr. Holmes nominated Cllr. Swann as Vice Chairman for this Committee. This was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed. Cllr. Swann was happy to accept the nomination.

**02/15:** Committee Meeting Times:

Members had a full discussion on the start time of the Committee and it was proposed by Cllr. Goodchild that the meeting continues to commence at 5.15 pm. This was seconded by Cllr. Swann and agreed. Cllr. Clifford made the suggestion that if this became a problem it could be revisited at a later date.

**03/15:** Cllr. Swann and Goodchild confirmed that they had carried out the internal check of the accounts for May and everything was in order.

The Clerk reported that our Kent County Council Internal Auditor had visited on the 20<sup>th</sup> May and completed his final audit for 2014/15 and there were no issues which needed to be brought to the attention of the Council.

**04/15:** Review of Investments:

The Clerk explained to Members that a review of our investments was good practice and Cllr. Swann confirmed that at present we had a current account, treasury account and money market account with HSBC as well as a current account with Lloyds. The latter is because we have to bank cash daily and HSBC closed their Cranbrook branch. The money market account pays a higher interest rate than the others. Responding to a question from Cllr. Holmes, Cllr. Swann confirmed that we have a responsibility to make sound investments which are open to public scrutiny. Cllr. Rook felt that in time cash and cheques would be made redundant and everyone will be using cards. After a full discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Swann to continue with our money market investment account, he stated that it was easy to transfer money between our accounts with HSBC and we had always been satisfied with the service. He would not support change at this present time. This was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

The Clerk informed Members that she had completed two new mandate forms for HSBC for the Parish Council and for the Tomlin Murton Playing Fields Trust in order for new Members to be able to sign the cheques. The Deputy Clerk had completed a new mandate form for Lloyds.

**05/15:** A list of payments made after the May meeting, is filed with these minutes.

**06/15:** Cheques for June were signed for payment as per the list filed with these minutes. It was proposed by Cllr. Rook, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed to authorise payment of the cheques as presented.

a) These included:

Policy and Resources	8,661.64
Burial and Properties	2,707.77
Economic & Community	3,157.00
Environmental Management	17,430.84
Total	£31,957.25

Cllr. Holmes stated that he was pleased to see that the Walk in Time leaflets had been printed. He wondered whether some could be distributed to other parishes and a contribution could be made. The Clerk explained that not all parishes had a public office, some Clerks worked from home. She felt that if we distributed them elsewhere this would dilute the amount which would be available for the many tourists and local people who visited the Information Centre throughout the year.

Cllr. Clifford brought forward an issue with a public footpath which runs through Birches Wood at Sissinghurst Castle Estate. An electric security gate had been installed. The Clerk informed Members that this had been reported to Jonathan Bibby, KCC Footpaths Officer.

**07/15:** Section 137:

a) An application had been received from the Cranbrook Fun Day/Apple & History Fayre for financial assistance in the sum of £750 towards street entertainment; for both events. It was proposed by Cllr. Holmes, seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed to award the £750 requested.

b) A letter had been received from Kent Association of Local Councils requesting funding towards setting up a working group to look at the east facing slips on the M25 at an appropriate location in the vicinity of Junction 5. In 2014 we had decided that we did not wish to be involved in the study or donate any funding.

After a full discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Clifford, seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed not to support this study with any funding from our Section 137 fund.

**08/15:** Fee Proposal – Planning Consultant:

Cllr. Bunyan brought forward this item. The developer Gladman had appealed against the refusal for 65 homes in Common Road. Our Planning Committee had felt strongly that we should be professionally represented at the Public Inquiry and had agreed to contact David Hicken, a local planning adviser who has the company DHA Planning. He confirmed that he would be delighted to represent the Parish Council at the Inquiry.

Cllr. Bunyan then tabled the fee proposal which identified the stage payments with the total cost between £6,880 to £9,440 + VAT. This included a 20% discount. The total cost would be determined on how many days DHA would need to attend. She confirmed that there were some monies set aside but not enough to cover the quoted amount.

Cllr. Clifford suggested that the majority of Sissinghurst residents appear to be against the Gladman development and there is a SOS action group which is very active. He was not sure on what the majority of people really feel. Cllr. Bunyan stated that huge numbers wrote in to TWBC to object – in excess of 100 objections. Cllr. Rook stated that there was never a poll of feeling in the planning process. There is only the right to support or object to the plans.

Cllr. Bunyan stated that it was imperative to make an urgent decision as there are time constraints within the appeal procedure. DHA will need to issue a Rule 6 within a specific time. She confirmed to Cllr. Holmes that they are specialists and Cllr. Swann confirmed that there is £3,500 of funds set aside. The remainder could be paid out of reserves and repaid in the next budget setting process.

Cllr. Rook suggested that there is an element of efficacy in that it is politically correct that we support residents of Sissinghurst. Cllr. Bunyan informed Members that Helen Grant MP had met with the SOS group and stated that she would call Gladman in for a meeting. DHA will only charge up to the point of progress. Cllr. Clifford asked who would be the point of reference from the Parish Council. The Clerk suggested that it would normally be the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Chairman of the Council. Cllr. Swann asked why we would want to appoint professional help when the Borough was probably already using a barrister. The Clerk stated that the Borough would be covering the legal aspect and policies and we would cover the more “local” points as well as policy etc. Cllr. Bunyan stated that by employing a professional advisor it would show the Inspector that we are vigorously opposed to the development.

Cllr. Rook proposed that we accept the fee proposal as set out. This was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

Cllr. Holmes asked whether DHA would be prepared to meet with us to give us brief on their strategy. The Clerk agreed to contact DHA to arrange a meeting. Cllr. Clifford suggested asking David Bedford from DHA to give us a schedule with timescales. Cllr. Swann thought that Cllr. Smith should be involved as he will be able to bring forward the issues from the SOS group which can be incorporated or covered within our appeal statements.

**09/15: Pilot Local Warden Scheme:**

The Clerk read out an invitation from Kent Association of Local Councils who is working with Kent Police on a Pilot Local Warden Support Officer Scheme. They are looking for up to 12 pilots across Kent. There is no cost to those parishes taking part at this stage but if the scheme is successful it is estimated that there would be a future cost of around £400 for the uniform and training costs.

Cllr. Swann felt that this was a complete waste of money with many pit falls and dangers. Cllr. Rook agreed with these comments. A full discussion took place and it was agreed to send a response that we did not wish to take part in the pilot and to make them aware that we feel that there will be pit falls and dangers and did not support the scheme.

**10/15: Restructure of Committees:**

Cllr. Holmes reminded Members that he had agreed to undertake a first draft of how the committees could be restructured. Cllr. Clifford tabled the document which sets out the roles and responsibilities for the various committees which he thought was useful. He enquired whether all Members knew what our responsibilities are. The Clerk suggested that she meet with Cllr. Holmes to discuss the day to day responsibilities which come under the various committees. She pointed out that our legal responsibilities are set out in the Good Councillors Guide which was supplied to all Members. Cllr. Swann reminded Members that some things which the Parish Council get involved in are not actually a legal responsibility such as housing and tourism but are very important issues. After a full discussion it was generally agreed that this issue would be ongoing with the aim to introduce any changes next May at the first meeting.

**11/15: TWBC – Disposal of non performing land assets:**

The Clerk tabled a document from the Property & Development Manager identifying two parcels of land and a footpath in our parish where we are invited to consider an alternative use. She reminded Members that we have already expressed an interest in the land in Carriers Road and the public conveniences site in Crane Lane.

The two parcels of land are a grass verge adjacent to Milkhouse Cottages, Sissinghurst and land running down the rear of the properties to the south of former self build plots at the end of Dorothy Avenue plus a footpath which runs from Dorothy Avenue through to Kirby Close.

After discussion it was agreed that the best option for the Borough Council would be to approach the owners of the properties in Dorothy Avenue to establish whether they would like to take on the ownership of the land and also the owner of the property in Milkhouse Cottages adjacent to the grass verge to establish whether they would like to take over this piece of verge. With regard to the footpath, the best option would be for the Borough to hand over the path to Kent County Council Highways.

**12/15: Items for Information:**

a) Cllr. Rook informed Members that he had attended a book launch at Cranbrook School today. Peter Allen was the author of a book which told the story of 500 years of the history of the School. Former head teachers had attended including Peter Close and Peter Rowe. There was very positive feedback with regard to the Parish Council.

b) Cllr. Clifford informed Members that he had resigned as Chairman of the St. George's Institute Management Committee.