

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN  
THE PARISH ROOM, SISSINGHURST  
ON THURSDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2016**

The Chairman read out the following statement:

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.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting. She reminded members of the public that this is a Meeting to which the public are invited, but it is not a public meeting. She would close the meeting at the end of the main agenda to allow them to speak briefly if they choose. She reserved the right to ask significant questions to be submitted in writing. The Chairman reminded members of the public not to disrupt the meeting and if they continued to do so after a request from herself as Chairman to desist, she had the power to ask them to leave. Having said that; she welcomed the interest from the members of public in our proceedings.

Dr. Joy Temple notified the Clerk that she would be recording the meeting.

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Goodchild, Fairweather, Fermor, Hartley, Kemp, Rook, Smith, Swann, Veitch & Warne.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Cook, Hall and Holmes. Borough Cllrs. Dawlings and Hannam.

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

90: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 11<sup>th</sup> August be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

**VISIT BY TWO SHORTLISTED LEAD NDP CONSULTANTS:**

91: **Richard Eastham & Anna (Feria) and Angela Koch (Imagine Places)**

Feria presented first and Imagine Places left the building for their presentation. Cllr. Kemp informed Members that these were consultants who might lead us through the generation of our NDP for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.

Richard Eastman and Anna (Feria) gave a short Power Point presentation which informed Members that:-

- They were a small planning practice based in Bournemouth
- Richard is an urban planner and Anna is a part one qualified architect
- They work across the country
- They had worked locally including Ticehurst, Paddock Wood and Hawkhurst
- Other projects had been Staplehurst, Faversham, Knowle West, Lewes, Loose and East Street
- Examples were given of where they were with the NDPs in the areas stated
- The different stages which needed to be gone through i.e. visioning and early advice, plan writing, submission, examination etc.

- That sense of place was one of the most important elements
- There are different issues for different places. In Staplehurst it was integrating new housing allocated in the Local Plan into the village. A plan was shown which now included different layers which helped the village to accept this more readily
- Design guidance and details of materials is also a consideration which can be included in a NDP
- There will be a need to find out how the NDP can distill the essence of what makes Cranbrook special
- An example was used where streets can be laid out which would be especially useful with regard to the Cranbrook Conservation Area. Areas can be identified which require attention
- The settlement in relation to the wider area i.e. Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells, Ashford and Hastings will have an impact on traffic movement through the settlement

Task 1 would be an Inception Meeting – to establish who needs input into the Plan. Task 2 – Site visits with photos and meet with interest groups. Task 3 – Plans, maps, task sheets and drawings. Task 4 – Sharing ideas in both Cranbrook and Sissinghurst which should be a celebration of what is good, it should be fun. Task 5 – Three day design forum with the big plan where ideas are developed and barriers are broken down. Task 6 – A short report. The conclusion follows where challenges are appreciated, skills are recognised and there is the experience to take it forward. Ferial then invited questions.

In response to a question from Cllr. Clifford on what is the standing of the document and what are the outcomes, Richard responded that when a NDP is made it becomes part of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Development Plan. The NDP is the first document that the Borough will look at to guide development. Their new LDP will run until 2032 and this will be mirrored by the NDP which will also run until 2032. A developer can always challenge policy and plans.

Cllr. Rook asked what the safeguards were should the Borough or its Members not agree with the NDP in ten years' time. Richard stated that the challenge is that there are no absolutes – there will always be committees that can ignore their own plans and policies. Cllr. Rook stated that there was no finality in law to which Richard replied that the NDP will be the final statutory plan for the parish but it could be challenged or overridden.

Cllr. Smith stated that he did not need convincing that we needed a NDP. He asked whether the Plan could include a maximum because of infrastructure or could it include link roads, bypasses etc. Richard gave the example of Staplehurst where something was dependant on a new bridge being built over the railway. Responding to Cllr. Smith on whether this was done on house numbers, he confirmed it was more on places. If you create a vision and in the future there will be more traffic which would be detrimental, you can then create a case.

Cllr. Swann asked how long it will take to get to the report stage and how much would it cost? Richard suggested eight months for the report with another ten months on the process so from start to finish should be in the region of eighteen months. With regard to cost, Task 1 – 6 would be £12,075 plus expenses. Task 7 – 16 has not yet been costed it would depend on how much needed to be done.

Cllr. Kemp asked how they were going to engage and lead the programme. Richard suggested that we needed to establish the policies and the benefits that will galvanise the community, people and economy in the future.

Responding to Cllr. Clifford on what sort of commitment is needed from the parish council, he stated that the key thing is getting the message out to the groups. That will be for the parish, they will not be undertaking advertising or media.

The Chairman closed the meeting and invited questions from the public. Responding to Dr. Temple, Richard stated that Feria would be coming in where necessary – a couple of days here and there when needed. It will be more than 30 days. The Chairman then re-opened the meeting and thanked Richard and Anna for attending. Feria agreed to forward a copy of the power point presentation to the Clerk.

Imagine Places – Angela Koch – gave the second presentation which included:-

- Angela was born in Germany and studied in London. She is a town planner and urban designer. She lives in Kentish Town and it has a NDP. This is where she started with NDP's and working with communities. It all began with the Localism Act. Imagine Places started in 2010 to help people to shape places. She has worked mainly in London but now branching out and recently taken on Ipswich
- She gets to work with a lot of people who are passionate about where they live
- A fee proposal has not been worked up as it is difficult not knowing the constraints, there are options of having relatively little help with her delivering draft proposals. She suggested that we shouldn't pay a consultant if there are people in the community who could write the policies and she could check them.
- With regard to timescales – in January she could organise an event and do a survey. The community could then work together and she would write a report. There is a resource kit which has been tested and should work. She would try to get everyone to work together. She would help you move forward. There would be another event at the end of April.
- A NDP can influence design quality. She tabled some kits which use simple blocks and tools which get people involved in design and break down barriers. Some people may not be able to draw but can move blocks around, using simple tools to get people engaged.

Angela then invited questions. Cllr. Clifford picked up Angela using the term “help you move forward” and asked whether she was anticipating that the parish council will have to move the work forward? Angela stated that she did not know, she did not know how much the parish council wanted to get involved. In some areas people can provide the data. It would be more expensive if she did all the work. It would cost £55,000 for her and other people she had not defined yet. Cllr. Clifford asked her where would we get the strategy and intellect or would she lay out a strategy? Angela suggested that the important thing is what matters and what are the key factors. A mini local plan is produced with three or four focuses. It depends on what the concerns are. We need to reach out and talk to the community.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Fairweather on percentage rate returns on the survey, Angela gave two examples on a postal and online survey. There are higher rates of return if there are issues of concern. It is good to do both paper and online surveys.

Cllr. Hartley suggested that we have a limited amount of time and resources and what did she think is the key essence; is there a single element which is crucial. Angela stated that it was green spaces and their protection. She thought that we would already have policies in place to cover this in the current policies. Public realm is also very important with cycling, walking and moving around. We must make sure that we have strong policies for developments with design codes; growth is coming but we need to say what we want.

Cllr. Kemp stated that he had first met Angela at a NDP seminar at Ashford where he had learnt a lot. At the seminar she had described a landscape of targets. She tabled the documents which Cllr. Kemp referred to and left this with the Clerk along with her CV.

Cllr. Rook referred to designs of houses and how much strength this would have in terms of planning. Angela suggested that the NDP is made by planners and not designers. Cllr. Rook then mentioned that some shops in Cranbrook had used primary colours where perhaps pastels would be more in keeping, is this something that could come under the NDP. Cllr. Smith suggested this should come under supplementary planning guidance. Cllr. Rook clarified that some companies have corporate colours and there was a failure to control this within the conservation area. Angela confirmed that the Plan could contain aspirations.

Cllrs. Kemp asked what proposal Angela was offering, was she offering a complete service – all in, or can she step back and tailor things in a different way. She confirmed that she could coach more than consign. The Chairman thanked Angela for attending. The Deputy Clerk then kindly offered to take Angela to Staplehurst Station which was gratefully received.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: CHANGE OF CHAIRMAN:

92: Cllr. Veitch referred to the latest minutes of the NDP meeting where the change of Chairman had been discussed and therefore she proposed that Cllr. Warne take over the Chair from Cllr. Kemp as from October. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

#### MOTION PUT FORWARD BY CLLR. WARNE:

93: **Motion put forward by Cllr. Warne:** In order to promote greater transparency I wish to propose a motion that should any councillor set up a meeting with a community stakeholder that the date, location and agenda of such a meeting be notified in advance to all other councillors, together with an invitation to attend and/or input to that meeting. Further, that a true and accurate record of the meeting be made together with the outcomes and that these be communicated in writing to the Clerk.

Cllr. Warne gave an explanation why she had put forward her motion for consideration. She stated that since being elected and to make reasoned decisions she needed to be in full possession of the facts or otherwise she might mislead and misinform people. It would help communication between councillors going forward. To progress the NDP it is important that she is fully aware of all things that are relevant. We need to increase our transparency and ensure that people can trust us and therefore there might be less opposition.

Cllr. Fermor agreed with these comments, it is important that all councillors know the facts, transparency is incredibly important. She used the confidential item recently discussed regarding Colliers Green as an example.

Cllr. Smith stated that he could see the intention of the proposed motion but he did not agree. It was up to the individual. Informal meetings go on all the time. It is difficult to monitor and the motion is not sound. He thought it unnecessary.

Cllr. Hartley stated that where the Member is meeting a stakeholder, representing the parish council as a whole or is acting as an individual, that is different. He had been told by Guy Johnson that a meeting had been held to discuss matters of access and dissenters were all discussed. Members had represented the Parish Council.

Cllr. Rook stated that he could not agree to the motion. Rules are in place already. Unless given a mandate to talk it is only the Chairman who can give a statement. When the Chairman has a meeting with Guy Johnson, he goes along as a witness to what is going on and if the Chairman is not available at any time to attend, he can step in. There is commercially sensitive information being discussed, to which Cllr. Hartley replied – rubbish. Cllr. Rook stated that notes are taken at all the meetings and at some point the land transfer has to be agreed but there is sensitive information with the Co Op which cannot be in the public domain.

Cllr. Warne stated that councillors are representing the electorate and we need to be in possession of the facts. She suggested that Cllr. Rook's response was patronising.

The Chairman reminded Members that she receives invites to many meetings including KALC and the Chairman's meetings. At other meetings she is either accompanied by the Vice Chair or the Chairman of the Committees. She cannot invite everyone. The Clerks are fully informed and she always reports back under her Chairman's Report each month. She is happy to provide a diary page showing meetings. There was a meeting with Guy Johnson and several issues were discussed and we will not be signing anything until terms have been agreed. The access across the Regal was discussed and we would not exchange contracts until the issues with the Co Op are fully resolved. She was fully sympathetic to the intention behind the motion and does try to do her utmost to inform everyone.

Cllr. Clifford suggested that it was not a motion of the detail, the information flow is not the detail, it is about an awareness. Cllr. Warne suggested it is straight forward – councillors need to know when meetings are being held and what it is about. Cllr. Clifford stated that he had not known anything about the Colliers Green site. He stated that Cllr. Hannam has invited the Sissinghurst Members to a meeting about Gladman, anyone can attend if they wish. Meetings should be signposted – perhaps as Items for Information.

Cllr. Smith suggested that it was a pointless motion if Members felt that they were not being informed they should go through the complaints procedure. Cllr. Goodchild suggested that the motion was trying to legislate against trust. Cllr. Swann referred to a recent incident where a councillor had called a meeting to which the Council was not invited. Cllr. Kemp suggested to Cllr. Warne that as the Lead on the NDP she would need to have her ear to the ground, there would need to be a trawl on information and she would need to get to know the stakeholders. Cllr. Rook suggested that Cllr. Warne's motion as put forward would not enable her to talk to the stakeholders.

Cllr. Warne put forward her proposal as per the agenda item. There were four votes for, six against and one abstention and therefore the motion was not carried.

## CHAIRMANS REPORT:

94: The Chairman hoped that Members had enjoyed the Sissinghurst August Bank Holiday Fete. She thanked everyone who helped, Cllrs Cook, Swann and Bunyan with her on the Parish Council stand, and in particular the Sissinghurst councillors who were all very busy. Cllr. Smith was flipping burgers. Cllr. Bunyan managed the coconut shy. Cllrs. Clifford and Fairweather did the organisation of the stalls, the races and were the voices on the loud speaker. We were also delighted that the Mayor of Tunbridge Wells attended the Fete, and was generous enough to stay for the whole afternoon.

Some would have spent time watching the Olympics. We have our own silver medal winner. Ruaridh McConnochre was part of the Rugby Sevens team that won a silver medal. He was a past Cranbrook School student, and also played for Cranbrook RFC.

Planning permission was granted for the Cranbrook Engineering and Wilkes Field sites, including the Community Centre, at the TWBC Planning Committee meeting on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August. As a result, the Extraordinary Meeting provisionally scheduled for Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> September is now confirmed. It is a single item agenda, the choice of consultant to use to undertake a Feasibility Study.

As requested by Members, she had now obtained a substantial amount of additional information and the presence of an additional consultant and as a result she has decided to make the Feasibility Study as a Confidential Item at the Extraordinary Meeting to be held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September.

It is important that we get this Feasibility Study undertaken as soon as possible. If they believe that we cannot afford to build the Community Centre in its current design, then we shall have to look at other options, perhaps reducing the size, perhaps building in stages. We may have to submit another planning application, and we would want to do that as soon as possible, so as not to delay the construction.

At our Parish Council meeting in August Cllr Jukes stated that he hadn't seen the Cost Plan for the Community Centre. He was provided with a copy in February, but had obviously forgotten that. We have sent him a further copy which he has now read.

At the TWBC Planning Committee on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> August it was stated that the KCC Libraries have decided not to come into the Community Centre. This is not true. She has also heard that Cllr David Jukes has said that the Library won't be coming in. This may be his personal opinion, but the discussions are between us and KCC. TWBC are not involved. We and KCC had agreed to suspend discussions until after Planning Permission was granted. She is now arranging a meeting with them to discuss the way forward. Of course it is possible that they do decide not to come into the Centre.

The contract for the land transfer of the Community Centre to the Parish Council is under discussion with the solicitors. Prior to signing this contract she will discuss the precise terms with Members. There is a take back clause. Draft terms are with our solicitor. Responding to Cllr. Hartley, she clarified that there is a delay of circulating the draft terms as our solicitor is now on a two week holiday.

She hoped that Members will participate and enjoy the various Cranbrook Literature Festival events, to be held 30<sup>th</sup> Sept and 1<sup>st</sup> October at various locations throughout Cranbrook.



The Chairman stated that she tries to meet with the Heads of Cranbrook School and the High Weald Academy every few months. Her next meeting is with John Weeds on 21<sup>st</sup> September, so if anyone has any topics that they would like to her to raise with them, please let her know.

She has a meeting scheduled with Mr. Gifford from TWBC on the 19<sup>th</sup> September regarding the transfer of the toilet block.

The next Parish Chairmans meeting is on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September at the Town Hall.

#### POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

95: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 6<sup>th</sup> September and referred to the grant of £1,000 for the new First Responders project to save lives. He invited questions, no questions were raised and therefore he proposed adoption of the Report; this was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

#### PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

96: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. She invited questions. No questions were raised.

#### BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

97: Cllr. Clifford stated that there had been no recent meeting. Work continues in issues relating to our properties and also the grounds contract. He thanked Ivor Hatcher, the Parish Warden for carrying out works which were over and above the call of duty.

#### ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

98: In the absence of Cllr. Holmes, Cllr. Warne referred to the report of the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> August and mentioned specifically the updating of leaflets which include the Welcome Pack and the Heritage Trail Leaflets. Cllr. Rook confirmed that a graphic artist is working on the Heritage leaflet. Cllr. Warne then mentioned the Cranbrook & Beyond leaflet and Cllr. Rook confirmed that this was a work in progress. Cllr. Warne informed Members that the Committee was also collating feedback from businesses. She invited questions, no questions were raised and therefore she proposed adoption of the Report, this was seconded by Cllr. Kemp and agreed.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

99: Cllr. Rook stated that no recent meeting had been held. He informed Members that this year the allotment completion prize giving would be held at the Cranbrook in Bloom event as it was noted that some winners felt uncomfortable attending a formal meeting. The first place winner had visited the Parish Office and had been delighted to win but unfortunately could not attend the event. Cllr. Rook invited comments regarding the new road realignment at Wilsley Green in readiness for the next committee meeting. Cllr. Smith stated that the kerb edging is not aligned properly. Cllr. Fermor thought there were too many signs.

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

100: Cllr. Kemp referred to the report of the meeting held on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September and he stated that the next meeting would be to talk over the presentations. The meeting is scheduled for next Thursday in the Addison VC Room. The Committee now needs to be converted into a public forum and we need a consultant and we need to decide quickly.

We need to reduce the number of councillors on the committee and increase the public membership. Cllr. Fermor asked for her name to come off the Minutes as she had already resigned. Cllr. Clifford asked what is the timetable and decision process? Cllr. Kemp confirmed that two consultants had been interviewed and the Committee will take any views and bring forward a recommendation. Cllr. Veitch suggested a recommendation could be made to the October Full Council Meeting. Cllr. Kemp then proposed adoption of the Report. This was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

#### CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

101: Cllr. Bunyan stated that the meeting is later this month and there was a meeting tomorrow morning on how to encourage a younger membership.

#### KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

102: Cllr. Veitch stated that she had agreed to be part of a new working group established by the Parish Chairman's group, to review the Tunbridge Wells Agreement. This document is described as 'A Collaborative approach to decision making by TWBC and the Parish and Town Councils.' If any Councillor wishes to see this document and make suggestions for the new version please contact the Clerk. The next KALC Chairmans meeting is on Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> September at Benenden. KCC is trying to devolve things to reduce their spending – they want to devolve some things to TWBC who will then try to devolve things to the parishes.

#### CLERKS REPORT:

103: The Clerk reported an alert received this morning. Fraudsters are spamming fake British Gas utility bill emails that link to a virus that takes over victim's computers. After downloading the file, the virus locks you out of your computer and then directs you to an online payment page.

#### CORRESPONDENCE:

104: No correspondence had been received which needed to be reported.

#### ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

105: Cllr. Rook informed Members that Barclays Bank will now not be open on a Wednesday and Nat West has changed their opening hours.

106: Cllr. Swann had been asked to make an apology to Dr. Temple but before doing so he would like her explain her vendetta against the Parish Council. Dr. Temple did not wish to comment. Cllr. Swann said he was very sorry and apologised. Cllr. Clifford queried what this related to but the Chairman suggested that this was confidential between the two parties.

107: Referring to the area which was nearly open to the elements behind where he was sitting, Cllr. Goodchild stated that he was grateful for the air conditioning.

108: Cllr. Warne gave advance notice of the Cods and Chips Night in the Vestry Hall on the 17<sup>th</sup> September.

109: Cllr. Kemp gave an update on the Community Land Trust, which can deliver taking over a pub, opening up a community shop etc. with any profits being returned to the community. A technical officer had visited and the group had been awarded funding under stage one and were now working towards stage two. He would keep everyone informed.



110: Cllr. Smith thanked everyone involved in the Sissinghurst Fete including Richard and Marie Burgess who had taken £1,020 on the gate. £2,500 had been taken in all and will be distributed to local charities. He thanked Cllr. Clifford for his commentary skills.

111. Cllr. Veitch gave advance notice of the Apple Fayre which is being held on the 8<sup>th</sup> October and the Sissinghurst Last Night of the Proms on 10<sup>th</sup> September. Cllr. Smith advised that this event had been cancelled.

112: Cllr. Swann informed Members about a Discovery Day at St. Dunstan's Church on the 15<sup>th</sup> October. The tower will be open.

113: Cllr. Bunyan mentioned the Sissinghurst Flower Show on the 17<sup>th</sup> September which unfortunately clashed with the ploughing match being held at High Tilt.

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