

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL, CRANBROOK
ON THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER 2017**

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

APOLOGIES: 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.

102/17: Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Cllr. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 9th November be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

103/17: Public Toilets:

The Chairman tabled the draft policy on public toilets that had been prepared for the NDP. We had been advised by TWBC of ongoing vandalism of the toilets which was frustrating. One suggestion was to close the toilets earlier during the winter months. Cllr. Fletcher voiced his disappointment that vandal proof fitting had not been used. He had spoken to some of the young people that congregate in the toilet and they had said they use them, because they want somewhere warm to go.

Cllr. Hall reminded Members that TWBC had offered £600 to a local business to open their facilities to the public. Cllr. Smith felt the only option would be encourage the Co-Op to provide additional toilets as part of their planned refurbishment until the new Community facility was built. Cllr. Cook advised of the scheme in Maidstone where maps show visitors where toilets for public use are located.

The Chairman closed the meeting to allow parishioners to comment.

A parishioner suggested that temporary toilets could be placed in the parking spaces in Carriers Road.

The meeting was reopened.

Members felt the cost of hiring temporary toilets was prohibitive. The Chairman confirmed to Cllr. Cook that the provision of public toilets was a discretionary service. Cllr. Kemp felt the provision of toilets was essential for any tourist destination.

It was agreed that Cllr. Veitch and Cllr. Fairweather as Chair of Environmental Management would further investigate the costs of all the options discussed.

104/17: Chairman's Report:

The Chairman stated that she hoped that many of those present were able to take part in the annual Christmas Extravaganza last Friday. Our local shops and businesses did a magnificent job with their decorations, wine, mince pies, and other delicacies, and of course, the hog roast. Our thanks to everyone, including the singers, musicians and especially the organisers, who made it such an enjoyable evening.

She thanked Cllrs. Clifford and Bunyan for being part of the team that awarded the Christmas shield for the retailer with the best Christmas effort to Harpers and Hurlingham.

She advised that she had continued with her series of visits to the schools in the parish, which this month included Cranbrook School, Cranbrook Primary School and DCPS.

She thanked everyone who participated in the Remembrance Day Service and the parade to the War Memorial. A large number of our parishioners were there, which she found very encouraging.

She reported that she had a meeting scheduled in January with Paul Taylor to discuss the figures in the Civic Centre Business plan, and in particular to query the savings expected from a reduction in the services provided to Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.

The Parish Chairmans meeting on Tuesday covered the new Data Protection legislation, which will take effect next year. This is likely to have an impact on our processes and procedures, and we will need to take professional advice. Both she and the Clerks were attending a training course on the changes in January.

There was also an update on local Neighbourhood Plans. Nine parishes in the Borough are in the process of developing theirs. Hawkhurst will be going to Referendum in early February.

The summary of the responses to the consultation on the draft Local Plan may be out before Christmas, otherwise the New Year. The standard methodology for calculating the number of new dwellings to be provided is out for consultation by the DCLG (Planning for Right Homes in the Right Places). Using this methodology would mean that the number for the Borough would increase to 13,800.

403 Sites had been submitted for assessment, of which 124 TWBC considered unsuitable. The report from the consultants assessing sites for a new garden village is now due by the end of December.

The discussions for the new refuse contract do include doorstep collection of bottles, and fortnightly collection of garden waste which is likely to be charged for, and weekly collection of food waste. The costs of continuation of the Civic Amenity Vehicle are to be assessed as part of the contract.

KCC will be launching their consultation on the local bus routes in January with a view of substantially reducing the amount of subsidy given to the services from £4m to £1m. Many services are under threat of being withdrawn completely, and the services through Cranbrook are amongst those being reviewed. The final decision will be made in May with services being withdrawn from September.

The new Local Plan requires a significant number of houses to be built in the Borough and Neighbourhood Development Plan team will be taking part in some of the site assessments.

Cllr. Veitch reported that she had recently met with the owner of the site submitted in Colliers Green and advised him that the Parish Council would not take part in the assessment for that site and it would declare its interest in the field of 3.7 hectares that he had offered to the Parish Council to provide, initially, a wildlife and adventure area, and which would include a parking area.. It would come with a dowry of £150,000 to ensure its proper maintenance. The gift is conditional on planning permission for a small number of houses.

Last month she had said that she hoped to be able to put in front of Members the Heads of Terms for the rights of access to Wilkes Field. Unfortunately these are not yet available. The survey of the condition of the Regal car park has been postponed to January.

The Chairman wished everyone a Happy Christmas and a healthy, happy and prosperous New Year, and invited them to share in a drink and nibbles after the meeting closed.

Reports from Committees:

105/17: Policy & Resources:

Cllr. Goodchild gave a report of the meeting held on 12th December and highlighted the discussion on budgets and five year plans. He reiterated his thanks to Cllr. Swann for all the work he undertakes in preparing the budgets. He thanked Cllr. Clifford and his team for their work on Parish Cake. He invited questions on the report, none were raised. He proposed adoption, this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

106/17: Planning & Preservation:

Cllr. Bunyan gave reports of the meetings held on the 21st November and 5th December. She invited questions, none were raised.

107/17: Burials & Properties:

Cllr. Clifford advised that the next meeting would be on Tuesday 16th January.

108/17: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather gave a report of the meeting held on 28th November and invited questions. None were raised, therefore he proposed adoption of the Minutes, seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

109/17: Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr. Warne reported on the recent public exhibitions and stated that all the information gathered from the events was being fed into the policy development. The vision statements and objectives for the plan were in the process of being written.

Cllr. Warne also reported on the visit by the AECOM planner Jesse Honey who was helping to assess some of the sites in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst. He confirmed that we are a complex parish so are eligible for additional funding for master planning. She thanked the bursar of Cranbrook School that had provided a minibus and driver to ferry around those involved in the site assessments. She invited questions on the Minutes of the meeting held 27th November. Cllr. Bunyan raised a question on the Housing Needs Analysis. Cllr. Smith advised that the online survey which had been sent to a statistical sample of residents should only be responded to by the recipients. It was reported that some of those that had received the survey were reluctant to complete due to the personal nature of some of the questions.

Cllr. Warne proposed adoption of the Minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Hartley and agreed.

110/17: CCAAC:

Cllr. Bunyan referred to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November, she advised that an update that had been expected on the Providence Chapel was not available at present.

Cllr. Hartley referred to the item on the former Windmill Public House and advised he had met with the developer and had been unable to persuade him to increase the amount of dwellings on the site and that they had confirmed they were intending to proceed with the development which has been granted permission.

111/17: KALC:

Cllr. Veitch referred to the Parish News which had been circulated via email. She had been given several nominations for the Community Awards Scheme, suggestions can be given to the Clerks who will collate them ready for the next meeting.

She advised that she had offered to host the next KALC Tunbridge Wells Area committee meeting on Wednesday 21st February 2018 in the Council Chamber.

Cllr. Veitch highlighted that 17th to 25th March 2018 is English Tourism week.

112/17: Cranbrook Tourism Group:

Cllr. Holmes reported there was a meeting scheduled for Tuesday 9th January and he would report on that at our next meeting. He intends to ask the group to consider a dialogue with the relaunched Cranbrook Business Association.

113/17: Reports from Delegates:

Cranbrook Museum - Cllr. Hall

They would be opening the museum on Sundays in July and August next year. The Co-Op donated £6448 to the museum this year.

C.B.A. - Cllr. Fletcher

The association is taking the view that they are there to support all businesses in the area to improve productivity, regardless of size. They are going to start by launching a programme of lectures to be held every two months, the first in January being on life support and the use of defibrillators.

Katherine Elizabeth Wood Charity - Cllr. Cook

He reported that the charity had a new Chair, Rev. Ann Pollington and that three applicants have been supported which has allowed them to continue with their studies.

500 Committee - Cllr. Cook

Cranbrook School is approaching the 500th anniversary and are looking at events involving the town.

John Spicer Apprenticeship - Cllr. Fermor.

There had been approximately ten young boys that had benefitted from receiving a grant in the last year.

Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group - Cllr. Holmes.

Cllr. Holmes explained that the group were aiming to run roadshows in the areas touched by the railway including Paddock Wood, Hawkhurst, Goudhurst, Cranbrook and Horsmonden, to inform local people of the group's aims, objectives and the detailed history behind the line. They are also running an exhibition in April and May at Cranbrook Museum which will be mostly photographic.

Transport Accessibility Group - Cllr. Holmes

The group exists to improve rural bus services. At a recent meeting the planned reduction in subsidies was discussed. The two services under threat that would affect our parishioners were the 297 Tenterden to Tunbridge Wells and the evening service of the No 5 to and from Maidstone. Cllr. Holmes has been delegated to speak to KCC Sean Holden to see where he stands on this issue, he will also be talking to the Borough Councillors to get their views. He will keep this Council informed of progress. Cllr. Cook had heard that the Courier were organising a petition against any moves to reduce services. Cllr. Fairweather suggested that a close eye is kept on this as a major part of the S106 on the Common Road development was a supplement for the late service of the No 5.

Cranbrook and District Age Concern - Cllr. Warne

At a recent meeting it was suggested that some of the funds accumulated could be spent by appointing a Development Officer for three days a week to start looking at ways of delivering services to the elderly of the Parish.

Citizen's Advice - Cllr. Smith

There was nothing to report at present.

114/17: Clerk's Report:

There were no issues to report.

115/17: Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to report.

116/17: Items for Information:

1) Cllr. Veitch advised that the last day for donating gifts for the Mayor's Toy Appeal was 15th December. She also advised that the immediate past Mayor (Mayor Dave) had published a book of puns and jokes contained within his speeches, throughout his year in office. All proceeds will be going to charity.

2) Cllr. Veitch advised everyone that The Cranbrook Journal written by Peter Allen was available at £4 a copy. She also informed everyone who was not already aware, that Bargain Hunt was filmed in Cranbrook on Saturday 2nd December, some of which was undertaken in the Council Chamber.

3) Cllr. Kemp informed the meeting that although the C.V.L.T. were able to match a bid for Turnden, it had been rejected in favour of a cash offer by a national developer. Discussions are ongoing as to whether a joint venture agreement could be considered.

4) Cllr. Holmes voiced concerns that Royal Bank of Scotland were closing 296 of their branches of which 190 are Nat West.

5) Cllr. Hall, in her capacity as a Borough Cllr. reported on the decision by TWBC to pass the Civic Complex by thirty votes in favour, thirteen against and three abstentions. She had spoken against the project and believed there were still many hurdles to overcome; one being the compulsory purchase order of Hooper's car park which they have pledged to fight, another, the escalating costs which had now risen to £90m. The debate had lasted almost four hours.

6) Cllr. Smith drew attention to St. George's Institute drinks party the following evening from 6pm.

117/17: Report from Borough Cllr. Dawlings:

Cllr. Dawlings had little to add to previous reports. He did wish to allay any fears that Cranbrook Museum would not get the necessary funding from Tunbridge Wells, although it would no longer come from the communities budget, which had been severely cut, he had been assured that it would be allocated from a special fund for museums.

He believed there were further discussions to be had with TWBC on the provision of public toilets in Cranbrook and would be happy to support us in this.

He was also working hard to pressurise KCC into providing a community recycling facility at the eastern part of the borough so residents of this parish did not have to undertake a thirty mile round trip.

The meeting was closed

The Chairman invited comments from the public.

Cllr. Fairweather responded to a question on litter picks, stating it was hoped one could be organised for 17th February in Cranbrook as was being scheduled in Sissinghurst.

A parishioner voiced concern on the lack of a referendum on the issue of funding the Civic Complex.