

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL
ON THURSDAY 9th FEBRUARY 2017**

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.

She welcomed everyone to the Meeting and reminded Members of the Public that this was a meeting to which they are invited but it was not a public meeting. If a member of the public wished to speak on an item on the agenda then she would close the meeting to allow them to speak but reserved the right to request that any significant questions be submitted in writing.

She advised everyone that it was with great sadness that she had have to inform them that Peter Jempson who was a Chairman of this Council from 1988 – 1991 and greatly respected member of this community had passed away on Tuesday. His intelligence, his humour and his great knowledge of the community would be sorely missed. She asked everyone to stand for a minute's silence in his memory.

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

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fairweather and Hall

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

213: The Chairman proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th January be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

FUNDRAISING FEASIBILITY STUDY & ACTION PLAN

214: The Chairman welcomed Carole Wanless and handed over to her to summarise her report.

Carole apologised for an error on page 14 which she had corrected, she had sent an amended version to the Clerk for circulating. In summary she stated that it all came down to money, £4 million was a lot of money for a community centre and even if the cost could be justified she had spoken to a lot of people and had been unable to identify someone that could give us a significant gift to help reach the target. The next layer of people to approach were the Charitable Trusts, there were not masses of Trusts that would look favourably upon a £4 million community centre and in her opinion there is only one that gives the sort of money that we required. This strengthened her view that to raise £4 million for this project was not feasible, however the report did not advise against a community centre just not the one proposed. If we were to reduce the target to £2 – 2.5 million then it would become more attractive to Trusts and HNWI's (High Net Worth Individuals). Her other concern with the viability of the current proposal was the take up by the local community as opinion is divided, which blights our chances of fundraising success. She suggested that we should look at ways of improving the engagement process.

She invited questions:

Comment: This was a good report, he had deduced from reading it that an urgent review of the project was necessary.

Response: Yes, the building is expensive, key weaknesses are heightened by the £4 million cost.

Comment: We had let ourselves down with the engagement process, we had a history of not being very good at it. We do not want to end up with a village hall, we want something that is fit for purpose. There was a lot in the report about parking?

Response: There was evidence that several attempts to engage had been made that were not entirely successful, there was a lot about parking because everyone she spoke to felt very strongly about providing sufficient parking for the Community Centre.

Comment: The report clearly shows a need for a community centre but the community has to believe it will happen. This is a one off land opportunity, yes there are obstacles that we need to get over. We need to design something we can afford. £2.5 million is not out of the question for a community this size.

Response: If we considered charging for parking it could take the heat out of the car parking issue.

Comment: The Parish Council were told categorically that the design needed to be iconic to be approved so we were caught between a rock and a hard place. This has dragged on for so long that costs have increased significantly.

Response: She could only reiterate that if insufficient parking spaces were available that people would not use the Centre.

Comment: This was a very thorough report and the content should be commended. Is it the fact that there are not the HNWI's in the area or that they are not prepared to donate large sums?

Response: There are not the individuals that have the funds that we need which would be 2 people giving £1 million each or 1 person giving £2 million. For the capital build 95% of the money comes from 5% of the people. We need to secure big gifts before we even approach the Trusts.

Comment: It was a thorough report with sensible conclusions. In his view the building designed was not fit for purpose. It was time to stop dreaming about a £4 million building that was unnecessarily complex.

Response: You can still have an iconic building at £2.5 million.

Comment: Better engagement will get more people on side. If our attempts to engage had not worked before then we need to recognise that and involve other people and events, this is a great opportunity to seek a fresh set of eyes.

Response: The Parish Council have tried really hard to engage but have not been successful, a different approach needs to be identified. The forthcoming NDP Visioning Event would be an ideal opportunity.

Comment: £4 million is a huge amount of money, could we not design a modular building that could be built in stages?

Comment: The building proposed is not going to happen, we need to complete a root and branch review, out of that would come a reliable brief, there is a right way to do things to avoid the fiasco we are now in.

Response: You need to get agreement on what the building does on the inside before looking at the outside.

The Chairman closed the meeting briefly to allow members of the public to comment.

After re-opening the meeting, the Chairman gave an update on the rights of access to the site which still needed to be resolved. In response to Cllr. Kemp, she stated there was no point in asking Councillors to approve any contract between Guy Johnson and the Parish Council until the access issue had been resolved. She informed Members that she had a meeting with the libraries on 21st February, which Cllr. Bunyan was also attending.

The Chairman thanked Carole for her report and felt she had spent much more time on it than she had invoiced for, which was really appreciated. She suggested that a further meeting was scheduled for all members to discuss where we go from here.

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

215: The Chairman thanked everyone for your cards and wishes for her speedy recovery, and also for the beautiful flowers which Cllr Goodchild was kind enough to deliver yesterday. Although she was not yet up to full strength she was getting stronger each day.

She also wanted to thank Cllr Goodchild for doing an excellent job in chairing the last Parish Council meeting, and for those of you that had braved the snow and ice to attend. Well done!

Cllr. Veitch formally welcomed Laura to the Parish Council team, and was delighted that she seems to have fitted in so well and is enjoying her new role.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

216: Cllr. Goodchild referred to of the meeting held on the 7th February. He made specific reference to the numerous grant applications that the committee had supported and the invitation for Cllr. Warne to join the Policy and Resources Committee in her capacity as Chairman of the NDP Steering Group. He reiterated that in adopting the Minutes the Council were endorsing the decision made by the Committee to launch the Parish Cake as a replacement for the current parish newsletter and asked Cllr. Holmes to present that item. Cllr. Holmes advised the Members of the process they had undertaken in order to make this recommendation. Cllr. Clifford assured Members that the magazine would not go to press unless the production costs were covered by advertising revenue. Cllr. Goodchild proposed adoption of the report; this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

217: Cllr. Bunyan referred to the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January and 7th February and invited questions. None were raised.

BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

218: Cllr Clifford referred to the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th January and summarised the contents. He expressed disappointment at the recent vandalism that had been caused around the parish. Cllr. Clifford proposed adoption of the Minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE:

219: Cllr. Holmes reminded his Committee Members that the next meeting would be held on 21st February.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

220: Cllr. Rook stated that the next meeting was on 14th March. The new play equipment had been installed at Sissinghurst and after concerns on a suitable location for it had been resolved, it had been well received.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

221: Cllr. Warne updated Members on the recent meetings that had taken place. They were now in the process of sending out the invitations for the forthcoming Visioning Events to the various community groups, businesses and key stakeholders. She expressed her thanks to the new Deputy Clerk for the valuable assistance she had given during this task. There was some confusion expressed regarding expenditure by the Committee which needed to be clarified. Cllr. Warne proposed that the Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January be adopted, this was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed. Cllr. Bunyan congratulated Cllr. Warne on the progress she had made.

CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA COMMITTEE:

222: Cllr. Bunyan referred to the meeting of the held on 25th January and invited questions. Cllr. Kemp was pleased to see that the Conservation Area Management Plan was still on the agenda and being discussed.

KALC:

223: Cllr. Veitch advised that the next meeting was on the 22nd February. She was unable to attend however both the Chairmen from Hawkhurst and Benenden were attending. If anyone had any issues that they wanted raised they could let her know and she would ask for them to be raised on our behalf.

CLERK'S REPORT:

224: There was nothing to report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

225: An email had been received from Paul Shipley – Contract Services Manager for TWBC detailing recent figures on waste collected by the Civic Amenity Vehicle. He reported that there had been no major increases in fly-tipping.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

226: Cllr. Kemp informed everyone that the Crane Valley Land Trust had successfully secured stage 3 funding in January so they can now move forward with incorporation and stage 4 funding.

227: Cllr. Smith stated that both the Gladman site and the Bringloe land had been sold on but had not yet identified who had bought them.

228: Cllr. Holmes had received worrying news that Arriva Bus Company were proposing to withdraw the Sunday service between Hawkhurst and Cranbrook in April. He referred to the fact that KCC Councillor Sean Holden's predecessor had found the funds to have the service reinstated some years ago, he was hopeful that Cllr. Holden would also lend his support to this issue. He intended to raise this at the next meeting of the Transport Accessibility Group.

229: Cllr. Clifford was pleased to report that a particularly bad pothole in The Street had been repaired within 3 days of it being reported.

230: Cllr. Rook stated that he was resigning as a member of the Parish Council with immediate effect. He had taken this decision because he was spending more time in Conyer and that the travelling was becoming increasingly onerous. He had been on the Council for 15 years and was very proud of what had been achieved in that time. To finish he wished everyone much good fortune for the future, and repeated the words of Terry Wogan – "Thank you for being my friend". He received a round of applause. Cllr. Veitch thanked him for all he had achieved and added that he would be sorely missed.

231: In response to a parishioners concerns, Cllr. Dawlings had spoken to Sgt Ross Shearing regarding the recent spate of vandalism in Cranbrook. He suspected that if properly reported, the recent incidents would be seen as more serious than petty crime. He advised that all incidents should be reported so a clear evaluation of crime in the area could be made. The Clerks confirmed that all damage to Parish Council property had been reported. He also mentioned that TWBC Overview & Scrutiny Committee were meeting in Hawkhurst on Monday, refuse is on the agenda as negotiations for a new contract are due to be discussed. Rural Speeding is also due to be discussed.

232: Cllr Hannam stated that there was to be a six month review of the Civic Amenity Vehicle, this would be done under the auspice of the Parish Chairmans meetings, he was hoping they would be more successful than he had been at getting figures on fly tipping etc. Cllr. Holmes pointed out that the CAV was out of action after the recent fire at North Farm and wondered if that would have an adverse effect on any figures obtained. Cllr. Hannam was also looking at getting another litter bin put in Common Road, on the opposite side of the road to the most recent addition.