

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL
ON THURSDAY 9TH JUNE 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.

No interests were registered.

PRESENT: Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fermor, Goodchild, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp, Rook, Smith, Swann, Veitch & Warne. KCC & Borough Cllr. Holden.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Fairweather & Hall. Borough Cllrs. Dawlings and Hannam. The Chairman informed Members that we had learnt that Cllr. Hall had suffered a stroke and we wish her a speedy recovery.

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

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

29: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th May be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed. Cllr. Rook abstained as he was not present at the meeting.

PRESENTATION BY FUNDRAISING CONSULTANTS:

30: The Chairman stated at the April Parish Council meeting that we would need to concentrate on our plans for fundraising for the Community Centre. We need to be able to show that we can deliver funds to pay for the Community Centre; otherwise the gift of the land may be withdrawn. We will need to review the project when there is more certainty on the planning permission and knowledge of the funds available. We could build the Community Centre in phases, simplify the design, and incorporate additional modern construction technology. The reason for putting the choice of fundraisers before Members tonight is so that we can ask them how much money we can reasonably expect to raise. Fundraisers would not take on an impossible project. The three fundraisers were chosen on the basis of personal recommendation, and from listings in the Institute of Fundraisers and the Association of Fundraising Consultants. There will be a secret ballot after the presentations. The Chairman stressed that the proposed contract will only be for this first Feasibility phase, not for the actual fundraising. The consultants giving presentations tonight were briefed at meetings and provided with a copy of the Business Plan. All Members had been provided with information prior to the meeting and the Chairman informed Members that Wootton George had not been able to provide anyone to give a presentation tonight. They had also not attended any briefing meeting. She had suggested to them that it may be appropriate to set a fundraising target higher than that in the Business Plan to allow for any increases in construction costs since the original estimates. For example, she had been told that brick prices had doubled due to shortages.

The first presentation was given by Paddy Hunter-Murphy. He stated that he was independent but did work closely with two associates. He had been a fundraiser for 31 years having worked previously with Starlight and the Royal Melbourne Hospital in Australia. He was a no nonsense consultant – you get what you see – he works closely with clients. He specialises in capital appeals. He had been working on a £2.2m appeal for a hospice for the last 18 months. He would work up to a feasibility study which could have three outcomes; not going anywhere; yes – full amount; or something in between. The first thing would be the strategy and the methodology. This is set out in the paperwork already provided. Secondly there would be the case statement which would be used to show people the project. He had read the business plan which contained a lot about fundraising which he had been impressed by. A list of suspects would be worked up i.e. wealthy, corporate, directors, general, trusts and foundations. People would then need to be recruited – appeal patrons – to share their networks, contacts and good connections. This would then give a good idea of the appetite for the project both regionally and nationally. It is a good project providing good local services which may appeal to benefactors. He stated that it would take 4/5 months for the Feasibility Study. Questions were invited from Members.

Responding to Cllr. Rook, Mr. Hunter-Murphy confirmed that the timescale could not be shortened. It would take 4/5 months to gather all the information. Cllr. Holmes queried whether more corporate support could be sought. Paddy stated that since 2008/9 corporate support has been difficult to achieve. Cllr. Clifford noted from the presentation papers that his total costs amounted to £94,800 and would he be interested in a stage by stage – what would be the cost to start the project. Paddy confirmed that he could be contracted just to undertake a feasibility study. Cllr. Clifford noted that it would cost £14,400 for writing the report which would take two days to write. Responding to a questions from Cllr. Goodchild on the written presentations document regarding “circumstances”, Mr. Hunter-Murphy used the example of where a delay could occur because something changed in the process i.e. someone deciding to sell their business. Paddy then left before the second presentation took place.

The second presentation was given by Caroline Hutt from Hutt & Co. She has been fundraising for capital projects for over 21 years. She was one of the first professional fundraisers in the UK to receive the CFRE qualifications and is currently a serving board member of the Association of Fundraising Consultants. She introduced her colleague Victoria Moon who has been involved in the campaign at Cranbrook School where she had successfully raised £450,000 since this March. A feasibility study has to test the waters. Will potential supporters see your project as compelling and urgent. Not everyone has to agree but you need a core of people to go with you on the journey. She spoke about targets and the scale of giving with the top gift on the scale being at least 10% of the test target. You can look at raising £3m but can you actually raise that, if not you cut your cloth accordingly. The research will test whether a community centre is needed in Cranbrook; where do you want to see yourselves in five years’ time; and what does the project offer the community. The Study will include a Fundraising Story which should be no more than a three page document. This should include who you are; why do you need it; what is the vision; who is going to champion or lead. They do not send out surveys, they talk to people on a one to one basis. 40/50 people would be identified for interview. These would be people who care for the community. The final report will give a fundraising target which is achievable and give recommendations on the best method to be used. The cost for the report is £7,500 – to be paid in two instalments. The first half on appointment and the second half on delivery. She reiterated that they do not carry out surveys – you need to inspire confidence when fundraising and surveys do not achieve this. Members were invited to ask questions.

Cllr. Clifford asked Caroline if she had any idea of what sums could be raised. She responded that a feasibility study would identify the figures. Cllr. Clifford suggested that by reading the business plan, she must have formed some idea. Is £2m possible? Caroline suggested that no consultant worth their salt would give a figure without a feasibility study. Responding to a question from Cllr. Fermor about time scales, it was suggested that it would take about six weeks to deliver the Study. Cllr. Hartley stated that he was impressed with the amount raised for Cranbrook School and queried how much had come via the Old Cranbrookians. Victoria Moon stated that most had come from parents, governors and trustees. Responding to a question from Cllr. Swann on how widely would fundraising be carried out, Caroline suggested that potential donors can be nationwide, they are currently working with Riding for the Disabled. Capital fundraising is usually carried out within the core such as with Cranbrook School and in the case of a community centre, with the citizens. Cllr. Swann asked whether people outside of the area would be networked. Caroline stated that you need the right person to ask in the right way – it should be people to people. You have to walk in the donors footsteps – why would they want to give to this project. You have to motivate and inspire. Caroline Hutt and Victoria Moon then left the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that secret ballot papers would be handed round for Members to vote for their chosen consultant. If they did not wish to vote for any of the three proposals then there was a space to record this on the ballot paper.

Cllr. Swann stated that he did not feel that he could vote on this subject this evening.

Cllr. Smith stated that you could not choose between the two presentations tonight as they were so different.

Cllr. Fermor suggested that there was a huge difference between the costs of the two presenters and would go for the one which costs the less.

Cllr. Warne liked the way that Victoria Moon was carrying out the campaign for Cranbrook School. We need to go out to the community and find champions, this was much more inclusive and would give those people who were happy to have their precept put up an opportunity to help.

Cllr. Hartley queried what they were pitching to, were they all party to the same information – he felt that Members needed more time to make a decision. The Chairman confirmed that they were all given the Business Plan and two of the consultants would not submit a proposal until they had met with us and the third Wootton George did not come to any meeting.

Cllr. Goodchild remarked that they were three completely different proposals from the same brief. All were different with their own style which he had picked up from their communication skills this evening which was very important.

Cllr. Rook stated that he had been impressed with the professionalism of Hutt & Co. When we first met Paddy Hunter-Murphy he did not know the area but he had been impressed with his presentation this evening. He is leaning towards Hutt & Co due to their credentials.

Cllr. Swann asked whether we had met with Wootton George. The Chairman reiterated that although they are a nationwide company, they had not attended any meetings.

Cllr. Clifford was concerned about making a decision this evening, questioning whether he knew enough without having any references or knowledge about various other projects the consultants had worked on.

Cllr. Goodchild proposed deferring the item for more information.

Cllr. Smith seconded this proposal. If we had to make a decision tonight we should go for the cheapest option, it is our duty.

A vote was taken on whether to defer the selection of a consultant to the next meeting. There were six votes for, six against and one abstention. The Chairman had a casting vote and voted for the deferment for one month.

In response to a question from Cllr. Cook on what would happen during the month, Cllr. Veitch stated that we can gather more information and even look at other consultants.

Cllr. Bunyan stated that she had no objection to either of the companies but she did not feel comfortable to make a decision this evening. Cllr. Goodchild thanked the Chairman for dealing with the issues so sensitively.

During the debate Cllr. Swann was out of order in a response to a parishioner Dr. Joy Temple and she demanded an apology. The Chairman apologised unreservedly to Dr. Temple.

RESOLUTION BY CLLR. MATTHEW HARTLEY:

31: Cllr. Hartley had asked for the following resolution to be put on the agenda:-

In the light of the recent community hub loan poll result the Parish Council has no mandate to proceed and should without delay withdraw any planning application made for this development and cease any associated fund raising activities or project planning of any kind until a proper and thorough review of community needs in the parish is undertaken and alternative options for community facilities properly evaluated.

Cllr. Hartley read out a statement which was in a question and answer format as below:-

Q: Who am I and what am I doing here?

I am an architect. My principle interest is in building design, townscape and conservation. My motivation for joining the Parish Council was to promote high quality development in the Parish. I don't personally want fame, fortune or power, but Parish Councils now have planning powers under Localism. Cranbrook and Sissinghurst are both unusually good and under immense development pressure, and must be defended from bad development. The buildings that we construct will endure longer than us after all.

Q: Why this resolution?

I'm extremely disappointed by the lack of discussion about the outcome of the loan poll. What it proved can and will be argued about no doubt, but it has a good deal of significance and this should be acknowledged. Yet as far as I know Parish Council Members have not been offered the opportunity to debate and are instead being led directly into a mammoth fundraising exercise. Are we not sufficiently reliable or intelligent to be invited into the discussion?

Q: Why should we withdraw the application?

Given the potential significance of the loan poll result, I feel deeply uneasy about pursuing this project, fearing it might end in disaster for the Parish Council, which has no relevant experience. I feel that Members are being pulled along to the party on the 'coat tails' of an unholy alliance of frustrated developer and certain entrenched local interests and that the 'morning after' might be particularly unpleasant. I think we need to create some space between the Parish Council and these interests for the sake of probity and good governance. I also think we should allow the developer to develop a high quality scheme on this combined site without the threat of it being blighted by an unfundable white elephant.

Q: What do I have in mind?

Whatever the demand/ need for community facilities may be, we should, as a prudent and responsible Parish Council, first seek to ensure that current and potential assets are fully utilised. Only then can we accurately assess any shortfall in community facilities and identify a genuine requirement for a new building. In doing this the people of this Parish will expect nothing less than that we are smart, clever and creative – grant funding is available for community facilities when they also happen to be heritage assets. Fundraising can be both minimised and greatly facilitated when conservation and preservation are put into the mix. Hence the plan for a heritage campus of community assets centred on Stone Street – incorporating the locally listed building which this Council is unwisely seeking permission to destroy. Have we considered asking the developer for that structure in lieu of land so we can create better community facilities at lower cost to the local ratepayer?

He urged Members to support the motion.

Cllr. Rook took exception to the phrase “entrenched local interests”.

Cllr. Kemp stated that he admired Cllr. Hartley’s pluck and that they shared some common ground. He thought the current community design was weak and not the best site for the hub. He thought it should be reduced down to a decent size to complement a cluster of existing heritage assets. It needs a design health check, the site could take more housing and have more space for businesses. It would be better for business and for tourism.

Cllr. Smith stated that while agreeing with some of the comments, the Loan Poll related only to whether ratepayers wanted to pay more on their precept. He firmly believed that a community centre is required and wanted on Wilkes Field. There are numerous interests and Cllr. Hartley does have an interest to declare. At the end of the day planning permission may or may not be granted and we will find out whether we can raise the money to build it or not.

Cllr. Cook stated that the Loan Poll asked a specific question and gave a specific answer. If we were to take up a feasibility study it would give us the answers to any questions.

Cllr. Warne suggested that with a feasibility study, if it involved as many of the community, just because people voted no to paying more on the precept, a feasibility study would establish the facts.

Cllr. Swann reminded everyone that we are proposing a community centre, not various community buildings. We want to bring the town together and regenerate the town.

Cllr. Rook updated everyone on the history of the project. People have been raising money for fourteen years. There is a pot of money in a fund from the successful coach trips which has always been earmarked for a community centre. He reminded everyone that the Parish Council cannot fundraise until we have planning permission. The project has been led by various groups over the years including Kim Fletcher, Peter North, Howard Cox, Dennis East and Sir Kenneth Warren. At one point one of the options was for a Centre larger than the Town Hall at Tunbridge Wells. This was kicked into touch by the Borough, it consisted on three floors with a cafeteria. We heard from Guy Johnson that he was going to withdraw the gift of the land. He went to see him to see if he would underwrite the project to the tune of £2m which he declined stating that he was gifting the land to the Parish Council. At this time we had not been notified by the group trying to deliver the project that this was the case. The decision was then made by the Parish Council that if the land was being gifted to the Parish Council then we should take on the project. TWBC planners have said that the building cannot be an ordinary building, it has to be a significant building in harmony with other iconic buildings in the town, namely the Windmill, St. Dustan’s and the cupola of Cranbrook School. It has to be the 4th element on the horizon of Cranbrook. The Parish Council took ownership of the project in 2014 and we have got to planning 18 months later.

This has been based on the needs which we have uncovered over several years. There is no adult education in Cranbrook. The University of the 3rd Age has come here as there is nothing else. If you want a chess club you have to go to Rolvenden. We are seriously lacking in community opportunities. There is a tremendous need for a community centre. Age Concern had 50 elderly clients in their dinner club in the former Council Offices but could not relocate to the Vestry Hall as it was not suitable for their needs. They are partners in the current design plans. We have gathered information to get the need. The “knockers” have not done anything to speak to the various organisations and groups to establish whether there is a need.

Cllr. Clifford enquired whether if the resolution went through would this supercede all other resolutions on the subject. Is there a mandate? The Chairman responded that there had been at least three surveys with one stating that 78% wanted a community centre which is a significant response. Urban Practitioners were appointed and carried out workshops etc in 2011 and a report came forward. Over the last 20 years all surveys and reports consistently came up with that there is a need, the number of facilities have reduced over the years. We could go out and do another survey but this is just going back over what has already been undertaken. Cllr. Clifford asked again whether other resolutions would be superceded should this resolution go forward. The Clerk confirmed that if a previous resolution to go ahead was made over six months ago, then if this resolution on the table tonight went through it would supercede the previous one. The Chairman stated that Members need to ask themselves do they not want a hall, do they not want a library, do they not want community facilities.

Cllr. Kemp stated that he acknowledged the need but did not think this is the right project. Cllr. Rook asked him where was his proof that an alternative design would achieve a real alternative. Cllr. Veitch reminded everyone that Wilkes Field has been the only site we have been offered. We have the need and we have the site. Cllr. Kemp reconfirmed his opposition to the project in terms of urban design.

Cllr. Goodchild suggested that the proposed resolution by Cllr. Hartley should be completely rejected for at least three reasons:-

1. The proposal is totally illogical and entirely devoid of sensible reason: To abandon and reject our project for a community centre because of the outcome of this survey, is like saying “because I choose not to use my credit card to make a purchase of, say a new car, I should not obtain finance by any other proper means, and therefore forget the idea of driving a car”.
2. It totally ignores the declared wishes of our town for the past 16+ years, to have a community centre in the centre of town. Indeed it suggests that Cllr. Hartley is trying to work against the town’s hopes and dreams of many years. As we all know, this has included various published surveys of community needs in the parish, costly professional research, and the loud cry of the townsfolk for almost two decades.
3. To ask that we “cease any fundraising activity” without delay, strongly suggests that the proposer is completely out of touch with the wishes of Cranbrook, and may have another agenda connected with his own obligation to deal with his own premises in the centre of town.

Cllr. Hartley then put forward his resolution as identified earlier and asked for a seconder. The motion was not seconded and therefore failed.

RECORDING OF PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS:

32: The Chairman suggested that this item be deferred to the July meeting to enable the Clerks to obtain costs of alternative systems. It was decided to put this issue back onto an agenda as previously we had agreed to look at the issue again after a six month period and also because members of the public were already recording the meetings.

CHAIRMANS REPORT:

33: The Chairman took the opportunity to remind everyone about the Garden Safari on the 12th June and the tea party being held on the Jubilee Field. Cranbrook Fun Day is on the 19th June and we will have a stand as usual. The Clerks will email out a question about rotas for manning the stand. She understood that the new mayor of Tunbridge Wells will be attending.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:

34: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 7th June and invited questions. No questions were raised. He proposed adoption of the Report, this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:

35: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. With regard to the Wilkes Field application, the Committee had made some minor comments including the use of red stock bricks and the lack of working chimneys. We have not yet put forward any suggestions for housing sites for inclusion in the SHEILA. Cllr. Holden stated that the deadline was August. He informed Members that he had spoken to Greg Clarke MP regarding the Core Strategy which had been overthrown by the Hawkhurst and Sissinghurst appeal decisions. 13,000 would be the new housing number and the Inspector has said that TWBC would not have the 5 year housing land supply until they have a new adopted plan. Herefordshire Council made a new plan and this was immediately overturned. He had asked Greg Clarke what was the point of Councils having plans if they are then overturned. Greg Clarke had accepted this point and would be taking this up. Responding to a question from Cllr. Bunyan on the Site Allocations documents and whether this had now been adopted, Cllr. Holden could offer no update. Responding to a question from Cllr. Rook on whether we need to build 600 houses in Cranbrook, Cllr. Holden replied that it is 684 borough wide.

Cllr. Holden was given the opportunity of giving his report on other issues at this point and he gave an update on where we are with the change in the speed limits. There is a current consultation on the changes. The junction alterations at Wilsley Green will be carried out in the summer. He stated that he had been impressed by Hutt & Co with their fundraising at Cranbrook School and this year he is supporting education and supporting Cranbrook School, High Weald Academy and the primary schools.

BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:

36: Cllr. Clifford stated that all was in order and no issues had been drawn to his attention. Cllr. Swann asked for an update on the idea for a wild flower meadow in St. Dunstan's. Cllr. Cook responded that he was waiting to speak to the PCC. Cllr. Swann reported that the contractors had requested that they could undertake an extra cut at Golford. Cllr. Clifford agreed to speak to the contractors.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:

37: Cllr. Holmes stated that the next scheduled meeting is on the 21st June. The Cranbrook & Sissinghurst promotion group had held a second meeting and he was pleased to report that the Cranbrook Tourism Group had organised a new Discover Cranbrook leaflet which he tabled.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

38: Cllr. Rook stated that the next meeting is next Tuesday which is the annual site visits. Members of the public are welcome to come along. The meeting commences at 6 pm at the Allotments. Cllr. Swann enquired whether the meeting could start at 6.15 pm. Cllr. Rook agreed to change the running order to accommodate Cllr. Swann who had specific items he wished to raise regarding the allotments.

AGREEMENT TO EXTEND THE MEETING OVER THE TWO HOUR TIME LIMIT:

39: Cllr. Veitch proposed that the meeting continue over the time limit set in our Standing Orders. This was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:

40: Cllr. Kemp informed everyone that an agenda will shortly be issued for the next meeting.

CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

41: Cllrs. Bunyan referred to the very successful awards presentation. It was hoped that this might be an annual event. She thanked Cllr. Veitch for her contribution towards the presentation evening. Cllr. Clifford stated that he had prepared a press release which he had submitted to the media.

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:

42: Cllr. Veitch reported that she had attended the Chairman's meeting a couple of weeks ago. Topics discussed included the requests for new housing site suggestions. The 45 acre site on the left hand side of the hill approaching Goudhurst had been put forward, much to the horror of residents. Local training for new councillors had been discussed and she had suggested consideration of IT based modules. The possibility of a new recycling centre in the eastern part of the Borough was raised and she, together with the Chairmen of Benenden and Frittenden had found themselves tasked with looking into this.

ACTION WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES IN KENT:

43: There was nothing to report.

CLERKS REPORT:

44: The Clerk had nothing to report.

CORRESPONDENCE:

45: There was no correspondence to report.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

46: Cllr. Kemp suggested that however passionate a councillor felt about an issue that it was unacceptable to tell a parishioner to "shut up" and that all Members should ensure that this never happens again.

47: Cllr. Rook updated Members about his recent trip to Yorkshire to represent the Council on the unveiling of the plaque regarding the hymn Cranbrook which is now known as Ilkley Moor Bah't 'At. They would like to come to Cranbrook at some time in the future.

48: Cllr. Cook reminded Members about the Armed Forces Day Service in St. Dunstan's. The Chairman confirmed that she would be attending.

49: Cllr. Swann asked whether there was an update on the amenity refuse vehicle. The Chairman stated that there was a delay but the changes were imminent.

50: Cllr. Veitch stated that we had been reminded by the Community Safety Manager at TWBC that this is the time of year when the travelling fraternity take to the road. There have been some recent incursions in Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells.

51: Cllr. Rook reported that he had been reading the consultation on Land Pollution on behalf of the Planning Committee and he would be ready to put forward views next week. If anyone has any views please let him know. Responding to Cllr. Smith, he confirmed that this was relevant to any land including agricultural land.

52: Cllr. Holden clarified that he was acting as a Kent County Councillor in relation to a possible recycling centre.

The Chairman closed the meeting to enable members of the public to comment or ask questions.

- With regard to fundraisers – look at whether it is an hourly rate or day rate. Also whether there is a risk payment. Look behind their prospectus. Take advantage of other information – Ann Marley had mentioned the funding of Smarden Hall and Brian Awford had information about lottery grants.
- Appreciated the comments made by Cllr. Smith on the fundraisers.
- With regard to Ikley Moor – there is a picture of Thomas Clarke in the Museum.
- Do not knock down the toilets in Crane Lane until the new ones are open in the community centre.