

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
HELD IN THE VESTRY HALL, CRANBROOK
ON WEDNESDAY 19TH APRIL 2017

Present: Cllr. Veitch (Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fletcher, Hall, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp, Smith, Swann and Warne.

Apologies: Cllrs. Fermor & Goodchild.

Approximately 35 members of the public

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Annual Parish Meeting and gave some guidance as to the conduct of the meeting.

THE MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:

Cllr. Veitch proposed that the Minutes be adopted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Holmes and agreed.

PRESENTATION TO FRANCIS ROOK:

Mr. Rook was presented with a gift to celebrate the time and expertise he had given to the Parish and Borough Council over the last fifteen years.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Cllr. Bridget Veitch

Firstly the goodbyes and the welcomes. As you have just heard, Francis Rook has stood down from the Parish Council after many years of service, but we can welcome Kim Fletcher in his stead, and hope that he will enjoy returning to the Parish Council. We thank all those who expressed interest in becoming a councillor, and hope that they will stay interested and involved in the Council activities.

We also said goodbye to Coral Kirkaldie at Christmas. Coral had been the valued Clerk for over 14 years, and a public servant for all her working life. Her knowledge of the Parish and expertise was huge, and of course, is missed. The good news is that we get to welcome Laura Larkin as our new deputy clerk, who lived in Cranbrook for many years. Lori Ham is now our Clerk after several years of experience with us. Lori is now a fully qualified Clerk, which enables us to retain our Quality certification. Welcome and congratulations.

There has been a lot of useful contact between the Parish Council and the councillors and officers at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. Cllrs. Jukes and McDermott came to the August PC meeting and several officers have attended various meetings throughout the year.

Last summer Tunbridge Wells Borough Council changed the schedule and process for the civic amenity vehicle (refuse lorry). To our relief the reduction in frequency and change to items collected has been implemented smoothly. To our surprise, the amount of fly-tipping has not increased. We are monitoring these figures carefully.

The Community Centre was given planning permission at the end of August. This is an achievement, and resolves several planning details. However the re-estimated cost of the whole project increased to a level that meant that the current design is unaffordable. This was confirmed by a professional fundraiser who did a Feasibility Study on our behalf.

We will have to look at a modified design that results in a more modest and realistic project cost. She was seeking volunteers from the community to participate in the on-going project. Anyone interested should provide their contact details to the Clerk. The Parish Council has not started on the redesign yet, as there are a couple of major difficulties to be overcome first.

The first is obtaining permission from the Co-operative Group for the right to access Wilkes Field from the Regal Car Park. This is an anomaly resulting from a legal agreement between TWBC and the Co-operative Group. The access does not require the crossing of any part of Co-operative Group owned land. This could not be resolved earlier, in spite of several meetings, as the Co-operative Group would not give approval prior to the granting of planning permission. She remains optimistic that this difficulty will be resolved, but can do very little to expedite it. Negotiations are on-going between Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and the Co-operative Group.

The second is the draft contract that transfers the land for the Community Centre to the Parish Council. At present the concept is that the land will be given freehold for a community centre, but that if the Parish Council decides that it will not, or cannot, build a community centre, then the land will revert to the current owner. There are differing views to whether a hand back clause will cause the Co-operative Group not to grant rights of access, and whether such a clause will hamper fund raising.

Again, she remains optimistic that a solution will be found.

She thanked all her fellow councillors who have been working very hard on various major initiatives that will benefit the whole community, in particular the Neighbourhood Development Plan and the new look parish magazine, Parish Cake.

Finally, she thanked the Clerks, without whom the Parish Council could not function. Their hard work and dedication is enormous.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Cllr. Peter Goodchild

Cllr Goodchild's report was read by Cllr. Swann.

The purpose of this Committee is simply to oversee the activities and expenditure of the Parish Council; including finances, staffing and administration. This committee is comprised of the chairpersons of the other committees.

He sincerely thanked the members of this committee, who faithfully and sacrificially continue on with their responsibilities contributing to the smooth running of a community in many different ways. We can forget the necessary functions of an organisation whilst it works well, but if breakdown occurs, then consequences begin.

Each councillor gives of their time voluntarily and sacrificially. He expressed his sincere thanks to those who do the work, and surely help to keep us all on course. Special thanks to our great clerks for being there. We are thoroughly equipped and informed by our new parish clerk Lori Ham ably assisted by Laura Larkin who both give their expertise very pleasantly to make our roles easier. They are truly invaluable and we all owe them a very big thank you!

The PC works to improve and maintain the good quality of life for everyone in our community. Life works well when we have the supporting involvement of the residents here in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.

Key words and attributes for him are co-operation, community and connecting. Finding the place where hearts can connect is better than pushing personal agendas. Often we meet obstacles and challenges but resolve to hold steady, making room for each other on the field.

To all those who take an interest in the financial workings of the Parish Council, he confirmed and assured them, that all is well. Bills are paid, debts are nil, and after rigorous checks, all continues on a track that is healthy, wise, and all 'in order'. As chair of Policy and Resources, he wanted to record continuing thanks to Councillor Brian Swann who faithfully executes these matters with dedication, professionalism and skill. The Finance Report has been printed separately & is available. Please direct any questions to Cllr. Swann.

Each councillor exerts good effort, but one must note the extraordinary workload undertaken by our very good chairperson Cllr. Bridget Veitch. She manages to attend a great variety of committee and inter-personal appointments connected with her role, and not least the hectic pathway in pursuit of projects and issues like the longed-for Community Centre. He has held this dream, this vision, for many years! It will become a reality!

He underlined the qualities that he saw demonstrated by councillors carrying certain responsibilities well. They are: (listed in the standard Parish Council Standing Orders booklet):

THE SEVEN PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC LIFE - As councillors we are committed to behaving in a manner consistent with the following principles:

SELFLESSNESS – always acting in ways for the good of all both financially and materially.

INTEGRITY – the quality of being completely honest on the inside and on the outside!

OBJECTIVITY – championing the needs of the whole, with the whole community in mind.

ACCOUNTABILITY – being always accountable to the public for decisions and actions.

OPENNESS – transparency in all decisions and actions, giving reasons for your decisions.

HONESTY – We have a duty to declare interests, always protecting the public interests.

LEADERSHIP – with a serving heart always demonstrating the above qualities!

You will be hearing more about the planned Parish magazine that is due to soon be delivered to your home. This is a great new and exciting venture to help us stay in touch.

There is a lot of responsibility and detail to attend to, to maintain smooth efficiency to keep us happy; street lights that work, cemeteries well-tended; footpaths kept clean and clear.

Street signage; rubbish clearance; property maintenance; and people management are recurring challenges. The recent big increase in costs of rubbish clearance through the borough has been considerable, but it's a cost beyond our control.

As a parish council we want to support town-wide events, both with promotions and with pounds. Some are new formed like the Community First Responders, assisting paramedics on location, whilst others are perennial and heritage focus points, like our excellent museum, the Windmill Association and Cranbrook in Bloom. Each month funds are allocated to help with good local causes: some are special days of community activity, and many are for more private charities that benefit many of us and our children.

He closed with a simple plea: We all have great hopes for the place we love – for Sissinghurst and for Cranbrook – places where we live and care about. Please take this to heart:

“Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way and is not irritable. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance. Love is the greatest - get it and give it.”

Finance report for the year 2016/17

This report looks at what your Parish Council has done from the perspective of its finances for the year to 31st March 2017.

The accounts show the precept and expenditure for each committee as follows.

	Precept	Expenditure
	£	£
Policy and Resources	209,800	194,343
Burials and Properties	10,400	35,877
Economic and Community Development	8,000	11,312
Environmental Management	71,000	100,579
Planning/Preservation/Housing	2,000	-
General, including contingency fund	3,000	1,243
	304,200	343,354
Earmarked funds not spent 2016/17 budget (put aside for future projects) including car parks (£1,700)		45,595

Our staff – the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, Vestry Hall Caretakers and Parish Warden (self – employed) – are our most essential resource and we could not run the Council without them. Our staffing costs, including National Insurance and Pensions amounted to £97,461.

Other significant items of expenditure were as follows:

Insurances	£9,186
General Administration	£15,377
Street Lighting	£23,214
Parish By - Election	£5,130
Vestry Hall – Rates & Utilities	£8,981
Repairs, Maintenance & Cleaning	£8,637
Roof Repairs	£3,860
Upkeep of Notice Boards	£1,055
Community Centre Preparatory work	£19,968
Updating I.T equipment	£1,197
Burial Grounds Business Rates	£2,013
Maintenance of Cemeteries & Churchyard (excluding grass cutting and hedges)	£5,351
Contracts for upkeep of Recreation Grounds, Cemeteries & War Memorials	£36,899
Recreation Grounds Repairs & Maintenance	£1,205
Play Equipment Repairs & Maintenance	£3,371

New Play Equipment	£8,866
Crane Valley & Nature Reserve	£22,578
Car Parks	£48,270
Amenity Refuse Vehicle	£1,221
Vandalism	£864
Grants to Voluntary Organisations	£11,114

These and all our other payments were funded by the precept, various grants, monies earmarked in previous years and the following income:

Bank Interest	£642
Rents Received	£3,987
Hire of Vestry Hall & Council Chamber	£24,133
Burial Fees	£17,250
Tomlin Murton Playing Field Trust	£6,000
Grants for work in the Crane Valley carried out by Kent High Weald Project Team	£19,052

At the end of the year there was £307,945 held as a reserve earmarked for future specified expenditure (including £98,500 for the Car Parks). There is also a general cash fund of £134,589.

The accounts are examined twice a year by our Auditor from Kent County Council and then sent as part of our Annual Return, to the Accountants appointed by the Audit Commission for approval. Once approval has been received the accounts are available for inspection at the Parish Council Office.

Cllr. Brian Swann

Vice-Chair – Policy & Resources Committee

BURIAL GROUNDS AND PROPERTIES COMMITTEE

Cllr. Brian Clifford

Cllr. Clifford stated that no committee was any good unless its members were committed and gave thanks to all the members of his Committee. He gave a list of members' responsibilities and what this entailed. He also paid particular thanks to Parish Warden Ivor Hatcher, who he described as the unsung hero we see around the Town. He gave a report on the condition of the various assets that the Parish Council own, including Angley Cottage which he remarked was well looked after by the current tenants.

He gave an update on the tree surgery that had been undertaken in St. Dunstan's Churchyard and reported that it would be completed at the end of the bird nesting season. A further Tree Safety Report had been commissioned for Sissinghurst Cemetery which the Committee were due to discuss at their next meeting.

He drew attention to the recent spate of vandalism that we had suffered and was saddened by it. Some necessary repairs had been put on hold for the time being.

He reported on the work done to the paths in Golford Cemetery and encouraged people to visit the Chapel to see the beautiful stained glass windows that had been designed by local artist Michael 'Louis' Woodford who had sadly died recently.

He completed his report by stating that the Burials & Properties Committee worked hard together but enjoyed what it did.

ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE Cllr. Graham Holmes

Cllr. Holmes stated that since his last report, the Committee have been working collectively on a number of small scale projects that we hoped would contribute to our local economy. The Brexit vote and the triggering of Article 50 by the Government will be taking us on an uncertain journey and there is little doubt that its impact will be felt across the country with Cranbrook and Sissinghurst being no exception.

Encouraging tourism by promoting the Town and the Parish is at the forefront of our efforts and this financial year we have updated and reprinted the Heritage Trail leaflets. They are also available online. In addition, we are working on a larger project to update and reissue the “Visit Cranbrook & Beyond” leaflets which will encourage visitors to explore the wider area. When completed, these will also be available online.

The Committee decided to completely revise the Welcome Packs that are given to all newcomers to the Parish via our local estate agencies and housing associations. The new version will contain all the necessary information that might be needed to help new Parishioners settle in.

We have completed our survey of local businesses and the results of this survey will now be passed to the Neighbourhood Plan Development Committee for them to use in the preparation of the Plan itself.

The Committee were also given responsibility for the placing of two new defibrillators in the Parish. With the help of Cllr. Fairweather, the first unit is now in place on the outside wall of the St. George’s Institute in Sissinghurst. We are awaiting some professional advice on the location of the second unit which will be placed in the Town.

The Council continues with its partnership working with the Cranbrook Tourism Group, the Cranbrook Experience and the Transport Accessibility Group. The latter have assisted others in the successful introduction of a new Sunday bus service between Cranbrook and Hastings.

On behalf of his Committee members he expressed grateful thanks to our two Clerks, Lori and Laura for all the hard work they have done in ensuring that the meetings are efficiently managed. He also paid tribute to Coral Kirkaldie who in his words had set him on a straight path when he had been in danger of going in the wrong direction.

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE Cllr. Graham Holmes

It is important that Parishioners understand what responsibilities and powers are carried by the Environmental Management Committee. In terms of diversity, it is the largest committee within the Parish Council.

It is responsible for the maintenance of the recreation grounds within the Parish which are situated at the Ball Field and Crane Valley in Cranbrook together with the Jubilee Field in Sissinghurst. In addition it provides and maintains playground equipment in all these locations.

The Council undertakes management and maintenance of the allotment gardens situated in Cranbrook. They are regularly inspected and a credit to the Town.

The Council manages and maintains the public car parks situated at The Regal, Jockey Lane and The Tanyard, all of which are within the Town centre. This was undertaken in order to ensure that our car parks remained free of charge at the point of use.

We also keep a watching brief on, but are not responsible for Public Highways and Public Rights of Way within the Parish. A proportion of the street lighting is our responsibility.

It is equally important that Parishioners are also clear about what aspects of daily life we are not actually responsible for. We are not responsible for maintenance of the Public Highways and footpaths nor do we maintain road signs, enforce speed limits, and deal with illegally parked vehicles or repair pot holes. These matters are dealt with either by Kent County Council or Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The Borough also provides the refuse collection service together with the recycling point in the Regal Car Park. In addition, they have a duty to remove waste that has been fly tipped on public land. Unfortunately, waste that is dumped on private land becomes the responsibility of the land owner. The Borough also provide street cleansing services. Whilst this extends to include litter, all too frequently it is local volunteers who undertake this work, often organised by the Parish Council.

In pursuance of its obligations during the last financial year, the Environmental Management Committee has carried out the following tasks:

- We have replaced playground equipment on the Jubilee Field.
- With the valuable assistance of the High Weald Partnership, considerable improvements have been made to the Crane Valley Nature Reserve.
- As part of an overall review we have had the trees surrounding the Tanyard Car Park professionally inspected and it is our intention to undertake the remedial work that has been highlighted.
- We are continuing to provide equipment support to Speedwatch in Sissinghurst. It would be good to get together a group for Cranbrook.
- We are now reviewing the placement of litter bins around the Parish to ensure that they are sited effectively.
- Lastly, we are supporting an initiative by Mr. Jeremy Boxall to secure improvements to Public Rights of Way and Bridleways within the Parish to ensure that everyone can benefit from a healthier lifestyle and at the same time appreciate our local landscape.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Committee, he expressed grateful thanks to both our Clerks, Lori and Laura and to Coral Kirkaldie for the considerable support they have given over the last twelve months.

PLANNING & PRESERVATION MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr. Alison Bunyan

It has yet again been a busy year. She thanked the clerks and the committee for all the work they have put in. She was a little concerned when our planning expert, Coral, retired at Christmas but Lori has worked hard and learned the planning regulations and terminology and hopefully the changeover is seen as seamless.

The areas that have exercised our minds are still the same as last year. The Gladman – now Countryside – site in Common Road, Sissinghurst; the Brick Kiln site in Cranbrook and as has been the case for several years, the Cranbrook Engineering/Wilkes Field site.

The Brick Kiln site application was discussed – heatedly in May last year and has not yet been determined. The developers have had lengthy discussions with the Borough Planning Department and she understood would be submitting a completely revised application shortly.

We will be encouraging them to hold a public drop-in consultation. This is a very large and important site in Cranbrook for 180 homes and we must all help them to get it right for the sake of Cranbrook. At the moment KCC Highways would like to see a new roundabout near the War Memorial which would not only slow the traffic along the Angley Road, but would also give safer junctions for Orchard Way and the High Street. As soon as we have more definite information, we will do our best to keep everyone informed – via the website, Be in the Know and our new Parish Council quarterly magazine – Parish Cake.

A reserved matters application for the now Countryside site in Common Road has been received and we, the Parish Council, organised a public consultation event in Sissinghurst. It was very well attended by parishioners and of course by the developers – who were pleasantly surprised how nice everyone was. She thought that because the site had been so strongly objected to, they were expecting an extremely hard time. Those 60 homes are going to be built and we have to make sure that Sissinghurst benefits. We collected comments and forwarded them along with our recommendation to both the Borough and to the Countryside team.

There is not much to be said about the Cranbrook Engineering/Wilkes Field site. Planning permission has been granted and the old buildings with permission for demolition have gone. The listed building on the site is presumably being preserved, but it's difficult to tell – the fence is very effective.

She was not sure if people were aware that the Borough Council will no longer be sending letters to neighbours about planning applications. The officers will visit the sites and put a yellow notice on a nearby lamppost or telegraph pole. You can also go the Tunbridge Wells website and register to be electronically informed of planning applications in areas of your choice.

She felt it may be of interest to know that we have seen about 150 applications and of those only 16 have been recommended for refusal and we have only been neutral on 3. Of course, all listed building and tree works applications are referred to the relevant officers.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMMITTEE

Cllr. Nancy Warne

The first public meetings were held by Cllrs. Kemp, Smith & Hartley in Cranbrook and Sissinghurst on 30th April, to raise awareness and ask for volunteers to help run the project and to get involved. The neighbourhood area for the plan was formally designated by TWBC on 8th June, and equates to the boundary of the parish. Along with Cllr. Kemp she started researching NDP consultants and followed up the contacts that might be interested, with a view to forming a Steering Group of councillors and residents.

She took the helm as Chair of the NDP & formed the Steering Group in September, Members of the Steering Group are as follows:

Cllr. Nancy Warne Chair
Cllr. Tim Kemp Co Vice-Chair (Cranbrook)
Cllr. John Smith Co Vice-Chair (Sissinghurst)
Annie Hatcher (Secretary)
Matt Warne (Treasurer)
Cllr. David Cook
Cllr. Matt Hartley
Lee Hatcher
Liz Daley
Tally Wade
Jeremy Boxall
Nem Goodman (joined January 2017)

Advice was taken from Claire Tester, ex-Head of Planning at Mid-Sussex and who has a wealth of experience in NPs, she advised us to formally agree a Terms of Reference, so that all the members are to abide by the code of conduct similar to that of the councillors.

A budget was worked out and agreed by the council.

We went through the process of shortlisting, interviewing and selecting a consultant. This led us to the recommendation of Richard Eastham of FERIA Urbanism, which was agreed by the council in December.

During the autumn, she and Cllr. Smith also met with TWBC planning department - Kelvin Hinton (Planning Policy), David Scully (Landscape & Biodiversity), Mark Stephenson (Conservation Architect), & Debbie Maltby (Conservation & Urban Design). We talked about their evidence gathering for the new Local Plan and how we could use that to inform our plan. Also, how our policies in the NP can be complimentary yet specific and distinctive for our parish.

Dates were agreed with FERIA for the first set of meetings and public engagements events.

Inception meeting & site visits:

January 19th/20th Richard and his colleague Anna Freiesleben visited Cranbrook & Sissinghurst and were toured around by members of the Steering Group.

We had an inception meeting with them to be briefed on methodology and to form a plan of action. It is our responsibility to draw up participation lists and invite people to the events.

We invited leaders from already active community groups, schools, churches, business groups as well as trying to encourage young people & interested individuals to participate.

She attended workshops and design forums in Neighbourhood Planning run by Kent Association of Local Council and by Kent Design. These were extremely useful for hearing others stories, getting invaluable advice from experts in planning but also networking.

A website was set up: <http://cranbrookandsissinghurstndp.co.uk/>

The Visioning Events were scheduled for 22nd/23rd March. They are designed to get a broad qualitative overview of the main values and issues of our places, through a series of written and map-based tasks. FERIA are currently collating the results from these events.

We recognised those groups that were missing and have contacted those to try and encourage them to get involved.

She is in the process of writing to all the landowners who have put their land forward in the “call for sites” and developers who are interested in developing in the parish to encourage them into dialogue with us, and to participate with the process. There is a meeting planned with Richard Eastham and Kelvin Hinton, TWBC Planning Policy Officer at the end of the April.

The 3-Day Design Forum – 9th-10th-11th May will be in The Coach House, Cranbrook School Waterloo Road. The first morning will be made up of 10-minute presentations from anyone who wants to share what is important to them, a “position statement”, be it from community groups, stakeholders (schools, churches, businesses, developers), interest groups (High Weald AONB, Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee), doctors etc. We want as many people as possible to get involved. This will take the results of the earlier Visioning Events and start to turn them into a spatial plan for the future of the Parish. At this design forum, drop-in attendance is welcome, as well as longer participation from those who can spare the time. We will particularly welcome input from teenagers and other young people so they can shape the way the parish looks, works and feels over the next decade or more.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council will be presenting its Issues and Options consultation on the Local Plan for the Borough in Cranbrook on Friday 12th May from 4-7pm in the Vestry Hall. This is the day after the conclusion of our Design Forum.

Cllr. Warne concluded her report with a request to Parishioners to come along and help inform the TWBC Local Plan – a document that sets out local planning policies and identifies how land is used, determining what will be built where. Adopted local plans provide the framework for development across England. Local peoples’ views are vital in shaping a local plan, helping determine how their community develops. The TWBC plan will guide future development in the borough up to 2033.

ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:

Cllr. Clifford informed everyone of the new parish magazine ‘Parish Cake’ which was replacing the existing parish newsletter. It would be delivered to every home in the Parish in the first week of July. It will be a 44 page colour publication that is a ‘slice’ of this community and a jolly good read. The cost to produce it will be free to the Parish Council as it will be covered by advertising revenue.

QUESTIONS FROM PARISHIONERS:

A Parishioner read out questions to which he had received replies to in writing, they were as follows:

Given that we, the Parish of which I am a taxpayer, do not have legal title to the land on which the Community Centre is to be built and neither do we have access to that land, then:

1. Why has the Parish Council carried on for so long spending public money on Architects, surveyors, loan poll, fundraiser’s report without having settled these basic matters? What is the cumulative total spent to date on this project?

Response: Initially there was no expectation that access permission was necessary as nothing passes over land belonging to the Co-Op. In 2014 it was discovered that in 2006, TWBC had given the Co-Op the right to veto anyone crossing over the entire car park area, and could charge up to fifty percent of the value of the rights of access. The Co-Op refused to discuss the situation until planning permission had been granted. This was not ideal but was forced upon us. £40,000 of the precept was allocated to Community Centre, however in future years, this sum could be spent on community facilities elsewhere, such as the Vestry Hall, if the Community Centre on Wilkes Field did not go ahead. The amount spent to date on this project is approximately £54,960.75.

2. What individual legal liability do parish councillors have for this expenditure?

Response: Parish Councillors are not legally individually financially responsible for decisions taken by the Parish Council.

3. May we please have an undertaking by the Parish Council not to spend any more public money until the matter of title and access are resolved?

Response: Although no decision can be taken by any councillor on their own, the Chairman stated that personally, she would not be recommending incurring further costs until these issues were resolved unless it was to sanction legal expenses to assist in resolving them.

The Parishioner stated that he was satisfied by the responses given.

A Parishioner raised the issue of a rise in reported cases of vandalism. Has The Parish Council been liaising with the PCSO about this to perhaps gain an improved police presence?

Response: Yes we have, the PCSO is now supplying monthly crime figures which are reported at Full Council meetings. The Chairman encouraged everyone to report any incidents to the police, as far as they are concerned, if it is not reported then it did not happen.

A Parishioner questioned whether any feedback had been received on the highway changes at the Waterloo Road junction as the build out initially designed into the new layout had since been removed?

Response: KCC Cllr. Holden had worked hard to achieve a desirable result, however the removal of the build out was essential due to safety reasons as it had been deemed dangerous.

A Parishioner stated that the car parks in Cranbrook are repeatedly being used for car sharing by commuters to Staplehurst Station or Tunbridge Wells. Could charges be implemented for those parking before or after a certain time of day?

Response: We did conduct a survey before we took over the car parks from TWBC and found no evidence of that happening at the time. It is something that we will continue to monitor, and share the concerns regarding a lack of available spaces in the town. The Policy & Resources Committee will be investigating possible solutions.

A Parishioner questioned the financial report and the amount held in reserves. She felt that the level of reserves were too high. She offered to help devise an alternative format for presenting figures that may be easier for residents to understand.

Response: We keep a certain amount in reserve to allow us to spread our expenditure. We save up for things so unexpected expenditure does not cause us an issue. Cllr. Swann described the differences between reserves and cash balances.

A Parishioner asked why the cost of street lighting had increased so significantly over the last year.

Response: This was mainly due to the cost of replacing the Parish Council owned columns on the Wheatfield Estate, which were of concrete construction.

Cllr. Veitch introduced the guest speakers for the evening – Crane Valley Land Trust.

Tim Kemp opened the agenda item by making the following points:

- Last year's APM, held in Trinity Church, Sissinghurst, was dominated by the issue of the Gladman promoted housing scheme at Collins Farm (aka the Common Road site).
- Many wanted to know what could be done in the context of an apparent planning policy vacuum given that the case revealed that the Borough did not have the requisite 5 year housing land supply in place to support its Local Plan.
- The NDP was 5 years behind and just starting up and the Parish was and remains at significant risk from inappropriate development.
- The only remaining community tool at our disposal, which could be advanced immediately, was a community land trust. As it wouldn't be possible to stop the development, it might at least be possible to raise the standard of housing delivery and tailor it to local needs.
- At the end of that meeting, then, a number of volunteers stepped forward to find out what CLTs were all about.
- That team of volunteers grew, with an impressive range of skills and, under the leadership of the National CLT Network (in Clerkenwell) we succeeded in winning all 3 stages of start-up funding (£5,500 in total) in order to incorporate the Crane Valley Land Trust.
- Just 12 months on and we have not only incorporated 6 months ahead of convention (although we tried to do it in 6), but we have a raft of projects of different scales live in negotiation.
- Some large sites, some small, coming under the control of our community. The largest of these enquiry sites we hope will come to fruition at the end of this month. Needless to say we will keep you posted.

A Powerpoint presentation was delivered on 'What, How and Why' the CVLT existed and who the steering group consisted of. It referenced several possible opportunities that had been identified in the TWBC Site Allocations Local Plan, adopted in July 2016. A copy of the presentation is available to see in the Parish Office.

Tim Kemp concluded the presentation by making the following points:

- Change is inevitable; if you embrace it then you can work to shape it to your community's needs.
- Given the current scale of activity in this nascent organisation, we hope that the positive, creative energy of this community will continue to propel the CVLT forward.
- Ultimately, it is our hope that the Crane Valley Land Trust will build a legacy for Cranbrook and Sissinghurst.

- The Trustees would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all those who invested their time, effort and knowledge into this venture and also those 500 individuals, in the nearer and wider community, who have undersigned their support to this project.