

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL, CRANBROOK
ON THURSDAY 12TH APRIL 2018**

PRESENT: Cllr. Veitch (in the Chair), Cllrs. Beck, Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Fletcher, Hall, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp (in part), Smith, Swann and Warne. KCC & Borough Cllr. Holden and Borough Cllr. Hannam.

APOLOGIES: Borough Cllr. Dawlings.

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.

Cllr. Fairweather declared an interest in the item on planning application 18/00262/HYBRID as a direct neighbour of the site.

Cllr. Hartley declared an interest in the item on site allocations as he had submitted several sites himself.

164/17: Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Cllr. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 8th March be adopted as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

165/17: Solicitors Quotes:

Cllr. Veitch explained that there would very soon be a need to instruct a solicitor to undertake the legal work in relation to the Community Centre, and in particular to handle the legal side of the land transfers. We have requested quotes from five solicitors, one of whom declined to quote.

As Members did not have the original brief in front of them, they were unable to relate the quotes to the figures in the spreadsheet provided. It was proposed by Cllr. Cook, seconded by Cllr. Hall and agreed, to defer the item to the next meeting, Members would be provided with the brief and any other information necessary to help them make an informed decision. Cllr. Hartley queried why any money should be spent on solicitors when the people of Cranbrook had already decided they were not prepared to fund a community centre by a rise in the precept.

166/17: Chairman's Report:

Cllr. Veitch welcomed Stephen Baughen, Building Control and Planning Policy Manager at Tunbridge Wells, to the meeting.

Since the March Parish Council meeting she had attended various NDP related meetings which she would leave to Cllr Warne to comment on.

She had also met with Ms Taylor at the High Weald Academy, and discussed the possibility of establishing a Youth Council in conjunction with Cranbrook School. The suggestion was well received, and she had promised to draft up some terms of reference for the schools to discuss themselves.

Cllr. Veitch reported that she had attended the service for Cranbrook School's Founders Day, scheduled for the exact date of the 500 years since the school was established and the memorial service for Cllr. Peter Davies who had been a Borough Councillor for 12 years and also had been a member of this council.

She had spoken at the Tunbridge Wells Planning Committee meeting on the Brick Kiln outline application. This was approved, there was no real expectation that this would be otherwise. If the application had been rejected, then the developer would have gone to appeal, and the inspector would have approved the application.

The resolution to grant included the following 2 additional informatives:

- The applicant is strongly encouraged through the details required by condition 21 to undertake the works to the High Street junction prior to the commencement of construction and if this is not possible reasons why should be submitted.
- The applicant is strongly encouraged to engage in early consultation with the Neighbourhood Development Plan Group, Parish Council and AONB Unit as part of the evolving of the reserved matters

Cllr. Holden had already confirmed to her that he would ensure that any detailed application would come before the TWBC Planning Committee.

The information circulated for tonight's meeting included the minutes of the parish chairman's meeting that she had attended, together with a copy of the presentation on the Local Plan. She reminded Members that the latter has a confidential categorisation in large print on the second page. This is because the details have been provided in the interests of openness, but are still provisional and subject to change.

The Chairman reported to Members that she had received a letter from Buss Murton acting on behalf of Mr Thomas Jones, informing us that he was formally withdrawing his offer of approximately 9 acres of land along with some funding that had been made in writing in July 2016.

At the end of May new General Data Registration legislation will come into force. There was a lot of work that needed to be done in order to ensure that the Parish Council is fully compliant, and the Clerks work load did not allow them time to undertake all of this work. She asked for volunteers to form a working party with her, to undertake the research as to what needs to be done, and to actually do as much as we can. We will also need to appoint a Data Protection Officer, more details of which she would bring to May's meeting.

She thanked the Sissinghurst Speed Watch team for their hard work. In one week in March they had recorded 67 vehicles exceeding the speed limit, with a maximum speed of 49mph being recorded in the 30mph zone. This averaged at one speeder at 35mph or higher every 4.3 minutes. This active team is looking for more volunteers to endeavour to make the streets of Sissinghurst safer for all users.

She advised Members that revised edition of the Regal car park report had now been sent to the Co-Op.

Reports from Committees:

167/17: Policy & Resources:

Cllr. Swann referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 10th April, in particular the item on staffing in which several measures to improve efficiency in the parish office were agreed. Several points on how these measures would be expected to work were clarified.

Cllr. Swann also recorded his thanks to Cllr. Holmes for his advice on the insurance renewal which had been invaluable. He then proposed adoption of the minutes which was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

168/17: Planning & Preservation:

Cllr. Bunyan referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 20th March and 3rd April and invited questions. None were raised. Due to the amount of supportive comments from Parishioners of Sissinghurst and the local school, Cllr. Veitch moved a motion to review the Parish Council comments on application 18/00262/HYBRID which had previously been submitted. The original recommendation was to refuse the application as the site had been independently assessed by AECOM as not suitable for development as part of the NDP process. Legal advice had been sought and it had been established that although the committee had delegated authority to submit comments, it was acceptable for the Council to consider the matter itself and reach a different conclusion, or to refer the matter back to the committee in the light of increasing support from the village, which was not evident when the original decision was made. Several members felt the application was premature but at the invitation of the Chairman, Mr. Baughen advised that many applications would be coming forward for assessment before the NDP and Local Plan were adopted and could not be refused purely for being premature. TWBC would take the view that sites such as this, should be judged on their own merits. A full discussion followed but as no decision was forthcoming, Cllr. Veitch proposed that the matter be referred back to the planning committee, at which time they could consider the new information available and make a decision at their next meeting as to whether an alternative recommendation should be sent. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook, and agreed with 10 votes in favour, and 4 abstentions recorded.

169/17: Burials & Properties:

Cllr. Clifford advised there were no issues to report at the present time.

170/17: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather reported on the meeting held on 13th March and invited questions. None were raised, he therefore proposed adoption of the minutes; this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed. Cllr Holmes updated Members that he had spoken to KCC Footpaths Officer, Jonathan Bibby who had reassured him that the damage to the footpaths in Angley Woods had been identified and would be rectified by the landowner and his contractor as soon as the weather permitted.

171/17: Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr. Veitch advised Members that Cllr. Warne had received a large number of requests from developers wishing to discuss the Parish Council's view on potential sites whether or not they have been submitted for assessment and may or may not be allocated. With this in mind, Cllrs. Veitch and Warne had agreed that no meetings would be held unless it related to sites already allocated and approved or sites that all parties agreed would be suitable for development.

Cllr. Warne referred to the minutes and gave a thorough report of the meeting held on 26th March. She advised that Stephen Baughen job title was Building Control and Planning Policy Manager at TWBC. With this minor amendment, she proposed adoption of the minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Kemp and agreed.

Cllr. Warne referred to meetings with the previous Head of Planning Policy, Kelvin Hinton, who had agreed that Cranbrook and Sissinghurst could undertake the process of assessing sites for allocation.

Cllr. Warne had followed due process and requested for a motion to be included on the agenda. She had intended to propose that Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council (C&SPC) undertake all the site allocations for the parish to be included in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), subject to a written agreement from Tunbridge Wells Borough Council (TWBC) planning department that no further allocations will be made within the parish in the TWBC Local Plan, without the prior agreement of C&SPC, and subject to substantiated evidence being provided. At a recent meeting with Stephen Baughen, he had offered the expertise and resources of TWBC, he had advised that the sites could be assessed for allocation through a process of collaboration between the Parish Council and TWBC. He proposed a 2 days of workshop to undertake this task. In response to Cllr. Fletcher's concern that many of the houses to be built may go unsold due to affordability, Mr Baughen confirmed that the Local Plan, therefore the numbers allocated, were subject to viability assessments. There would be further information when the Housing Needs Analysis was released. Cllr. Hall felt that the process of site allocation was time consuming, we needed to ensure that the NDP is adopted so it becomes a material consideration sooner rather than later and that the policies were more important than actual sites. Cllr. Smith felt that any collaboration needed to be by way of a formal agreement with TWBC, which should be approved by this Council. Taking into account the views of all Members, Cllr. Warne withdrew her motion.

172/17: CCAAC:

Cllr. Bunyan referred to the draft minutes of the meeting held in March and invited questions, none were raised.

173/17: KALC:

Cllr. Veitch advised that the latest newsletter had been circulated by the Clerks.

174/17: Reports from Delegates:

Katherine Elizabeth Wood Charity – Cllr. Cook.

Cllr. Cook advised there was a meeting scheduled for next week.

Citizen's Advice Bureau – Cllr. Smith.

Cllr. Smith had received an email from C.A.B detailing the types of matters that they had dealt with and including statistics specifically relevant to the Cranbrook area, he would circulate this via the Clerks.

Cranbrook Tourism Group – Cllr. Holmes

Cllr. Holmes advised the next meeting was scheduled for 9th May.

Transport Accessibility Group - Cllr. Holmes

Cllr. Holmes advised the next meeting was scheduled for 20th April.

Cranbrook Museum – Cllr. Holmes

Cllr. Holmes advised the next meeting was scheduled for 24th April.

Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group - Cllr. Holmes.

Cllr. Holmes reported on the meeting held on 20th March, at which the programme of roadshows at various parish meetings had been decided. As Cranbrook & Sissinghurst already had a guest speaker for their Annual Parish Meeting, a photographic exhibition would be running at the museum during April and May. He was also giving a talk to Cranbrook U3A next week.

175/17: Clerk's Report:

There were no issues to report.

176/17: Correspondence:

There was no correspondence to report.

177/17: Items for Information:

Cllr. Veitch reminded everyone of the Annual Parish Meeting being held in Sissinghurst on Wednesday 18th April. The meeting was not due to start until 7.30pm but tea and coffee would be served from 7.15pm.

Cllr. Cook reflected on the front page of the Messenger newspaper and the shocking discovery of animal remains in Tilsden Lane.

178/17: Reports from County and Borough Councillors:

Cllr. Sean Holden:

Cllr. Holden advised of a report written for the Joint Transport Board referring to the poor state of the double yellow lines in Cranbrook and Hawkhurst. He had long promoted the proposal to repaint the lines in the heritage style and colour which would incur a cost of approximately £20,000. This had been dismissed in the report as too expensive. Cllr. Holden had referred the issue to the Leader and the Chief Executive of the Council stating his case. He was pleased to say in the light of this, the report had been withdrawn at the present time and alternative solutions were being sought, one of which is to remove all the lines and rely solely on appropriate signage. He has reiterated that the Parish Council should be consulted on the final decision.

He advised of the ongoing ‘pothole blitz’ and stated that it would cost £650 million to repair every pothole in Kent.

He also advised that he was overseeing an experiment in Colliers Green on installing superfast fibre broadband in hard to reach places.

Cllr. Linda Hall:

Cllr. Hall commended the excellent efforts of several of the TWBC planning officers involved in the Brick Kiln planning application, which had resulted in the preservation of the ancient woodland and field system. She also advised of a draft revised N.P.P.F. which is currently under consultation, she encouraged everyone to comment to ensure greater protection of the AONB.

Cllr. James Hannam:

Cllr. Hannam advised that he would only ‘call in’ a planning application if there were a disagreement between the officers and the Parish Council.

The meeting was closed.

Questions from Parishioners:

In response to an earlier question from Cllr. Clifford on Speedwatch, Mr. Bancroft advised of the procedures that follow when vehicles that are caught exceeding the speed limit.

A parishioner commented on the site allocations item and felt that the final decision on where they should go should rest with the community.