

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN THE  
COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL, ON THURSDAY  
10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015**

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, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Goodchild, Hartley, Holmes, Smith, Swann and Veitch. Borough Cllrs. Dawlings and Hannam.

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Clifford, Franks, Hall, Kemp and Rook

**MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING:**

173: The Chairman, Cllr. B. Veitch proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12th November be adopted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

**VISIT BY CARRIE BEECH – PRINCIPAL – HIGH WEALD ACADEMY:**

174: Carrie Beech informed Members that the HWA was a chosen Hub School for The Peace Field Project. She tabled a red football which was very symbolic. Carrie stated that this is a national project to link school playing fields with Flanders Peace Field. HWA will be working with primary schools in the area to look at such things as life in the trenches, battle of the Somme, local history and any local links together with research around WW1. Some pupils will visit Flanders Field. She would like to enlist the support of the Parish Council and Councillors to attend the Exhibition and Sports Event which will be held at the School which will officially twin the School's playing field with Flanders Peace Field. HWA want to work with the community on the project, with any veterans who can help the youngsters, there will be planting of poppies with seeds from Flanders which could perhaps be linked with Cranbrook in Bloom, there is also the local branch of the British Legion who could possibly assist.

Responding to a question from Cllr. Fermor, Carrie confirmed that it was the National Children's Football Alliance. HWA 6<sup>th</sup> Formers will work with primary schools on such things as a model mock-up of the trenches for the Exhibition. She also confirmed to Cllr. Fairweather that many local primary schools will be involved and also Cranbrook School. Cllr. Holmes thought it a very interesting project and made the suggestion that some students are also members of football clubs and perhaps they could get involved. Carrie Beech clarified that it will be a multi-sport event and not just football. Sport encourages tolerance, understanding, team work and pride values – she wants to keep the project focused and manageable. She clarified that talking to any veterans from any war will be beneficial to the understanding of the students. Cllr. Holmes informed Carrie that he volunteered at a warfare museum at Headcorn and he could provide some information about veterans.

Carrie Beech informed Members that a group of students had already visited Maidstone Museum and the University of Kent at Canterbury to learn the history of the War. Cllr. Holmes remarked on an enactment display which he attended at Batemans which was very well delivered. Carrie suggested that local families might have diaries or artefacts which could add to the Exhibition. Cllr. Cook mentioned that Cranbrook has a Muster Roll and perhaps other parishes might also have such evidence; Peter Allen – a local historian – might also be able to help, as might David Pack – former pupil of Angley School and Cranbrook School who served in the Gherkas and is a career soldier.

The Chairman closed the meeting to enable parishioners to comment. Borough Cllr. Dawkins thought this a very interesting project. He lived in Benenden and the British Legion had prepared a super chart with thirty two names on the chart – two names on the list were sons of Viscount Rothermere who not only has been generous to Benenden but also the Nation with his involvement with the Imperial War Museum. The Chairman re-opened the meeting, Carrie Beech welcomed any thoughts and ideas via email or via the HWA website.

**LOCAL COUNCIL AWARDS SCHEME: FOUNDATION & QUALITY STATUS:**

175: The Chairman handed over to the Clerk to introduce the item. The Clerk explained that the Awards Scheme had changed and that currently we hold Foundation Status which is due to expire in January 2016. To continue to be a Quality Council we need to re-apply for Foundation and also apply for the Quality Status. All Members had been furnished with the sets of criteria which need to be met either by evidence on our website or by hard copy. She went through the list and confirmed to Members that all the criteria can be met and evidenced. The website has gone under a redesign by our website management team and both her and the Deputy Clerk had been working hard to produce the evidence and updating the website. She encouraged Members to look at the new website where they will see their profiles and photographs. The new site is designed to be mobile and tablet friendly and went live today. Responding to a question from Cllr. Fairweather she confirmed that she had checked with Terry Martin from KALC and we did meet the criteria regarding elected councillors as Sissinghurst Ward had an election and Cranbrook had an uncontested election.

The Chairman then proposed that:-

Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council confirms by this Resolution that it publishes online all the criteria as set out in the Foundation Award Scheme and the Quality Award Scheme and can meet all the other criteria as set out in both the Schemes. This was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

The circulated documents are filed with these Minutes.

**WAITING RESTRICTIONS IN CRANBROOK:**

176: The Chairman referred to the documents and the email from Nick Baldwin – Senior Engineer, Parking Services, TWBC and invited comments. Cllr. Fermor stated that the current situation is manic, it is difficult in Stone Street – perhaps the area outside of the George Hotel could be utilised for parking. Cllr. Bunyan suggested that if the lines are to be repainted they should be paler yellow and narrower. She also thought that the area opposite the exit from the Co Op should have double yellows – it is difficult for lorries to exit if there are cars parked opposite. CCAAC should also be involved in the consultation.

Cllr. Smith suggested that the parking should be extended down to the Indian Restaurant, outside the George Hotel and even opposite although of course the development of Cranbrook Engineering may have an impact on this. Cllr. Fairweather queried Enforcement and suggested we needed some feedback from TWBC; does Cranbrook see any of the revenue? The Chairman stated that if councils make any profit on the enforcement on the streets, it has to go back into roads or parking; we could ask for it to be ring-fenced for Cranbrook. There has been rather less enforcement lately than we have been used to. We have never had any feedback but we could ask. She had met up with the Parking Manager recently and had mentioned the lack of enforcement and had been reassured that there would be more enforcement in the future. Cllr. Swann suggested that it was probable that they couldn't enforce at the moment as the parking orders are out of date and the lines so poor.

Cllr. Holmes thought the traders in the town should be invited to comment. He was concerned that the restrictions are unenforceable. Could people who have been ticketed get their money back? Cllr. Veitch suggested people can always make a challenge but it was unlikely that many tickets had been issued. Cllr. Holmes made the radical suggestion that all the yellow lines should be done away with, no one is taking any notice of them at the moment anyway.

Cllr. Swann pointed out an area at the lower end of Oatfield Drive where if a car parks on the corner, vehicles then have to cross over to the right hand side of the road on the junction which is very dangerous. It needs double yellow lines on both sides of the road and for these to be enforced. The Clerk made Members aware of correspondence she had received from residents of Rammell Mews regarding the parking issues in Frythe Way where vehicles park on both sides of the road and when there are events on the Rammell Field the situation is intolerable.

Cllr. Fermor asked if there was any merit in getting rid of all the lines. The Chairman suggested that they must be there for a reason i.e. bus stops and other health and safety reasons. Cllr. Goodchild made the suggestion that new lines might help to remind people to park safely.

It was agreed to pass our comments on to Mr. Baldwin ahead of the new Traffic Regulation Order.

#### **CIVIC AMENITY REFUSE VEHICLE:**

177: The Chairman reported that she had met with two commercial operators to investigate whether we could provide our own service but neither company were interested in providing a quote. We have two options – either go with the proposal on the table by TWBC or do away with the service. Cllr. Swann reminded Members that TWBC were not only wanting to charge us for the service but they had also cut the service – it is being halved. The Chairman asked Members whether they wanted to accept the Borough proposal and then perhaps ask for a quote to get an advanced service. She confirmed that the cost would be £814 for Cranbrook and £407 for Sissinghurst.

Borough Councillor Hannam stated that the parishes and Members displeasure had been made clear to the Leader – the budget cuts had not yet been agreed. Cllr. Dawlings stated that there had been an acrimonious Group Meeting – a lot of people were unhappy about the cuts to the service. Benenden is still voicing serious concerns.

The Chairman had noted that other parishes had similar views as put forward by this Council but they had been told at the last Chairman's Meeting that 9 out of the 14 parishes had already accepted. After listening to the views of Members this evening she would postpone this item for discussion at a later date. Cllr. Smith reminded Members that waste collection is a Borough responsibility. The Chairman stated that TWBC were saying it was a discretionary service which could be cut. We now know that we cannot get any interest from other commercial operators to take on the service.

**TRUSTEES – KING GEORGE'S FIELD, SISSINGHURST:**

178: Cllr. Holmes informed Members that the Parish Council should have three members who are on the board of trustees for King George's Field. Currently we are one short, we need a replacement for Denis Hemsted. Cllr. Smith volunteered but stated that Mr. Hemsted could continue if he so wished. The Clerk confirmed that she had spoken to Denis Hemsted and he did not wish to continue. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Smith for volunteering.

**CHAIRMANS REPORT:**

179: The Chairman stated that several Members attended the two design workshops organized by Pegasus, looking at the design of the Brick Kiln Farm project, intended to contain 250 dwellings. She was sure that they appreciated the wide range of ideas and suggestions that we, and the other attendees, were able to give. She thanked everyone for attending.

The Rev Ann Pollington's licensing and installation was held on the 17<sup>th</sup> November and Cllr. Veitch stated that she was pleased to see how many of our Councillors were present. It was an enjoyable service, as was the 'feast' provided afterwards. Cllr. Veitch informed Members that Ann has asked her to do the first reading at the Christmas service on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December and she was pleased to be able to accept.

The Chairman reported that she had attended the Parish Chairmans meeting on Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> November. The minutes will be made available when we have received them. There was a presentation on the intentions to vacate the Town Hall complex, build a new one, and to build a new Assembly Hall on the site of the Great Hall car park. She reported that together with Cllr. Bunyan she had attended the first of the Parish Councillors Design Training Sessions at TWBC. It was interesting, but she doubted whether we added very much to our existing knowledge.

Cllrs. Rook, Bunyan and herself had attended a pre-application meeting at the Town Hall with regard to the Community Centre. We were able to establish what aspects of the application required more work or detail. We are investigating whether TWBC would allow any changes to the Regal Car Park to provide more spaces, and if there are any possibilities of sourcing additional spaces elsewhere. The Members of the Community Centre Committee were tasked in September with completing their part of the Facility Audit by Christmas. She reminded those who haven't yet sent in their findings to do so by the target date. An updated version of the business plan will need to be submitted with the new planning application. She stated that she would be grateful if Members would submit all additional or updated information to her or the Clerks by the end of the year so that she could incorporate it in the updated version. It is the intention to get an updated set of costings as the current ones are now over a year old.

The Chairman then invited Cllr. Hartley to give a brief update of a recent meeting he had attended.

Cllr. Hartley informed Members that he and Cllr. Kemp had met with David Rivers on Tuesday to discuss and explore whether the Cranbrook Engineering scheme could be modified to see if the existing buildings could be retained. These were exploratory discussions.

It is quite possible that conversion to residential or commercial would not be viable. The space is 4,000 sq. ft. and it could cost £1m to bring them back into use. The conclusion he had come to was that the only use which could be considered would be charitable or community use. The buildings are not suitable for residential use. He wanted to bring to the Parish Council attention that the buildings could be fully restored, it is not too late, we have a chance to save these very interesting buildings. It is not too late to save them with a change of direction –look into your souls and look at the possibility of reusing them. Be aware of the potential and take decisions with full knowledge of the options.

Cllr. Veitch thanked Cllr. Hartley for his update. She informed Members that a provisional date had been set for an Extraordinary Meeting – the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2016. The only item on the agenda will be the Community Centre. Decisions need to be made on the Business Plan, Planning Application, Poll Card, choice of VAT consultant etc. We may need a charitable trust to avoid paying VAT.

#### **POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE:**

180: Cllr. Goodchild referred to the report of the meeting held on the 8<sup>th</sup> December. He referred specifically to item 64/15 and thanked the Clerks for all the extra work they are undertaking on this issue. He also referred to 67/15 and thanked Cllr. Swann for undertaking the Budget and Five Year Plan. He invited questions. No questions were raised. Cllr. Goodchild then proposed adoption of the report; this was seconded by Cllr. Fermor and agreed.

#### **PLANNING & PRESERVATION COMMITTEE:**

181: Cllr. Bunyan stated that two meetings had been held and the Minutes circulated. She invited questions, no questions were raised.

#### **BURIAL GROUNDS & PROPERTIES COMMITTEE:**

182: In the absence of Cllr. Clifford, Cllr. Bunyan referred to the report of the meeting held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November and stated that Members had gone through every aspect of the Burials & Properties responsibilities. It had been agreed that a surveyor inspect Vestry Hall Cottage to ensure that the fabric of the property is sound. We have taken ownership of one of the BT kiosks. She thanked Cllr. Swann for his hard work on the Budget and Five Year Plan. She invited questions, no questions were raised. Cllr. Bunyan then proposed adoption of the report, this was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

#### **ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY COMMITTEE:**

183: Cllr. Holmes referred to the report of the meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> December and he thanked Cllr. Swann for preparing the budget and five year plan for the Committee. He invited questions. Responding to Cllr. Cook, he confirmed that Cllr. Franks had not yet replied to the question on the draft questionnaire as mentioned in the Minutes. Cllr. Holmes then proposed that the report be adopted, this was seconded by Cllr. Hartley and agreed.

**ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:**

184: In the absence of Cllr. Rook, Cllr. Holmes referred to the report of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> November and invited questions. Responding to a question from Cllr. Cook, Cllr. Swann confirmed that the street light report had not yet been received. Responding to a question from Cllr. Bunyan on who would undertake quarterly litter picks, Cllr. Veitch stated that she hope it would be Councillors and volunteers. We need to do more publicity. Cllr. Holmes then proposed adoption of the report, this was seconded by Cllr. Goodchild and agreed.

Cllr. Veitch then gave an update on the issue of play equipment for Jubilee Field. She had met with the two ladies from Sissinghurst who had shown an interest and together they had chosen two pieces of equipment which they all thought suitable. She tabled the two examples. She would now go to the suppliers for a costing. We had received a donation, and we are going to apply for some funding from TWBC which we will have to match fund. Cllr. Cook was concerned on the surface under the “witches hat”, years ago in Cranbrook it was concrete. Cllr. Veitch confirmed it would be surfacing to meet the standards i.e. “soft”. Cllr. Fairweather hoped that there would be consultation of where the equipment would be sited and asked how this would affect the issue of fencing. Cllr. Veitch stated that during the discussions the group had been asked whether they wished to spend the money on a fence or some new equipment and they had preferred some new equipment.

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN:**

185: In the absence of Cllr. Kemp, Cllr. Veitch stated that he is in the process of arranging the first meeting.

**CRANBROOK CONSERVATION AREA ADVISORY COMMITTEE:**

186: Cllr. Bunyan referred to the recent minutes and informed Members that CCAAC are awarding certificates to people who have done a good job on renovating a listed building or a building in the Conservation Area. With regard to the Providence Chapel, the Conservation Officer is keen on potentially moving the Museum into the Chapel but this has to get the approval of the History Society. Everyone is concerned about the state of the Chapel. Parking lines were discussed as was the minor revisions to the Gladman plans where Members will see they had no objections. This was only to the minor revision, CCAAC do not support the Gladman project.

**KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS:**

187: Cllr. Veitch informed Members that she had attended a recent meeting and would circulate the minutes when available.

**ACTION WITH RURAL COMMUNITIES IN KENT:**

188: There was nothing to report.

**CLERKS REPORT:**

189: The Clerk had nothing to report.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

190: There was no correspondence to report.

**ITEMS FOR INFORMATION:**

191: Cllr. Cook informed Members that he had mentioned to Rev Ann Pollington his idea for a wild flower meadow in St. Dunstan's Churchyard and she had been enthusiastic. He would raise this with the PCC.

192: Cllr. Cook stated that he had been approached by parishioners about the LED lighting in the estate agents which is left on during the evenings. There are two views, any extra light in the dark evenings might be welcome, but not so welcome perhaps if you live in the town centre.

193: Cllr. Fermor stated that wearing her Tree Warden hat she had inspected the magnolia tree in St. Dunstan's. There was a deep hole in the trunk and she had suggested that we ask a tree surgeon for advice.

194: Cllr. Bunyan referred to the Borough Consultation document on Community Involvement and suggested that all Members might like to view the document.

195: Cllr. Smith informed Members that he had spent four days over the last two weeks attending the Inspectors Inquiry on the Site Allocations DPD. Half a day was spent on discussing Crane Valley. Villages and Rural Areas had also been discussed- all the documents are on the TWBC website – go to Planning – then Policy – then DPD. He commended that Members look at item 37. He tabled a graph and explained the various items for Members interest. TWBC are saying that the base level should be changed. He confirmed to Cllr. Veitch that discussions on Cranbrook were curtailed because Paddock Wood over-ran. He hoped that the DPD will be found to be “sound”.

196: Cllr. Holmes stated that he and Cllr. Rook had been involved with the Cranbrook Literature Festival, we have made contact. It will be interesting for Cranbrook

197: Cllr. Veitch closed the meeting and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and invited everyone to remain for refreshments. She would put out on the table some revisions of internal layouts for the Community Centre. We can have an exploration of alternatives, for information.

198: Borough Cllr. Dawlings informed Members that the second Gladman application had been turned down. He was very reassured by the general confidence of the Planners about the Appeal. With regard to the Town Hall scheme, agreement had been given to proceed. A new town hall will cost less than the present town hall and the theatre will cost less than the original and an office block will bring in revenue. It is a well-conceived scheme which will take some years to deliver. With regard to the yellow lines and parking, he had also been sent the documents and he had listened to our comments and will bring our points forward. He reported that he has attended one of the Brick Kiln Farm workshops. He had also attended the Speeding meeting when it became aware that the differing policy between Kent Highways and the Police needed to be bottomed out regarding fatalities and KSI's – killed or seriously injured. He concluded by saying that he thought the Christmas trees in the Town looked fantastic.

199: Borough Cllr. Hannam informed Members that TWBC are undertaking work on a policy for fracking. There had been a controversial test site in Sussex. The responsibility will sit with Kent County Council but the Borough will have a working group to make sure the local community would be compensated. It is looking less likely that fracking will be necessary with the way that fuel prices are dropping. His personal view was that fracking is good as long as all the necessary measures are put in place.

- Are the Neighbourhood Plan meetings going to be formal? The Chairman clarified that no terms of reference had yet been set.
- Speedwatch – road signs are dirty, everywhere looks tatty. Not helpful if motorists cannot see signs. Cllr. Dawlings stated that the Police are now working with the groups. Most of the culprits are local people.