

MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON TUESDAY 10TH FEBRUARY 2015

PRESENT: Cllr. Swann (in the Chair), Cllrs. Hemsted, Holmes and Veitch.

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Bunyan and Rook

Members who had a personal or prejudicial interest, whether direct or indirect within the meaning of Section 51 of the Local Government Act 2000, or a personal or prejudicial interest defined by the Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's Code of Conduct, in any of the matters appearing on the agenda were invited to declare that interest at this stage. Alternatively, personal interests can be declared at the time when the specific item is being discussed, if a member wishes to speak on an item in which they have a personal interest.

Cllr. Swann declared a personal interest in 55/14 (a) due to his involvement with St. Dunstan's.

51/14: Internal Finance Check:

Cllr Swann stated that he had completed the internal finance check for January and everything was satisfactory.

52/14: Authorisation of payments made after the January meeting:

The list of payments made after the December meeting, is filed with these minutes.

53/14: Cheques for payment:

Cheques for January were signed for payment as per the list filed with these Minutes.

These included:

Policy and Resources	£18,299.35
Burial and Properties	£9,959.86
Economic & Community	£468.00
Environmental Management	£5,996.80
Total	£34,724.01

54/14: Orange Land, Crane Lane:

The Chairman reported that a site meeting had been held on the Orange Land in Crane Lane last Thursday morning. This is the land owned by the Parish Council running down from adjacent the public conveniences to the Crane Valley. At the meeting were David Rivers acting on behalf of the developer of the Cranbrook Engineering Site, Cllrs. Swann and Veitch together with the Clerk. We had stated that we continued to prefer that the area is not used for turning as documented in our response to the planning application, however we accepted the necessity of using a part of it subject to the following conditions:-

- The hedge from the footpath up to the electricity station could be removed, so long as it is removed immediately, before the birds start to build nests.
- In principle the hedge must be replanted once access is no longer required. The necessity and details of this are to be reviewed when the planning application relating to Wilkes Field has been agreed.
- The top soil is to be removed from the agreed area and appropriate material laid that would support the planned traffic. This should not be undertaken until the planning application for access has been agreed.
- In principle the area is to be returned to current status, but again the necessity and details of this would depend on the planning application for Wilkes Field.
- The area to be used is the area from the footpath up to the line of the hedge removal.
- Suitable safety precautions will be instigated as per the planning application.

It was proposed by Cllr. Swann, seconded by Cllr. Hemsted and agreed that the decisions taken at the site meeting subject to the above conditions be ratified.

55/14: Section 137 Application:

a) An application had been received from St. Dunstan's Church for funding in the sum of £500 towards the successful Messy Church project. This was to help with purchasing craft materials and equipment. Cllr. Holmes proposed that the sum of £500 be awarded. This was seconded by Cllr. Veitch and agreed.

b) A letter had been received from Tunbridge Wells & District Samaritans requesting a donation towards their funds which they require each year in order to keep their service open. Members wished them well with their fundraising but in this instance they declined the request for S137 funding.

56/14: Hop Pickers Line Project – Funding Request:

Cllr. Holmes updated Members on the current situation with the Hop Pickers Line. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has now come on board and is supporting the project. David Scully from the Borough has suggested that as part of the due process that an asset register should be produced of the route which would entail an industrial archeologist to produce a report. This would add another part of the jigsaw to put into a business plan. The cost of producing the documentation would be £6,000 and to apply for a grant match funding is required. The Borough is prepared to put in £4,500 and the parishes which are supporting the project are being asked to provide some funds. Paddock Wood has already pledged £750. Cllr. Holmes made the suggestion that Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council might like to offer £500. A full discussion took place and Cllr. Holmes answered queries from Members. He stated that Kent County Council were still on board with the project. The Borough has included the Hop Pickers Line in their current Development Plan Document and supports the project. He confirmed that further down the line, after the submission of the business plan, KCC will need to draw the definitive line of the footpath and also manage the path thereafter. Cllr. Swann proposed that £500 be pledged to the Hop Pickers Line project to enable the assess register to be produced. This was seconded by Cllr. Veitch and agreed.

57/14: Complaints Procedure:

The draft Complaints Procedure had been circulated to Members prior to the meeting and Cllr. Swann explained that the Deputy Clerk as part of her training has to assess and produce certain documents. Our existing procedure had been examined and updated to reflect current standards. A full discussion took place and Cllr. Veitch suggested an amendment under item 1, adding in that if a complaint is not satisfactorily resolved that advice should be sought from the Monitoring Officer. Under 7, the words “Standard Board” should be replaced with “other”. Cllr. Holmes suggested that under 9, the word “liability” should be replaced with “prejudice” also that the words “If deemed necessary” should be removed. Cllr. Swann proposed that the Complaints Procedure dated February 2015 should be adopted with the amendments as discussed. This was seconded by Cllr. Hemsted and agreed.

58/14: Transparency Code:

Cllr. Swann reminded Members that this item had been discussed at the November meeting when it was found that the original Code did not apply and KALC had confirmed that the Code remained as “recommend practice” for parish councils. Subsequently a further Code for Smaller Authorities has been published but it appears that this also does not apply to Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council as it is for authorities with a turnover not exceeding £25,000. The Clerk informed Members that she had spoken to Clive Powell from KALC who confirmed that there appears to be a loophole in the legislation in that there is a Code for larger authorities and a Code for smaller authorities but nothing in place for medium authorities. He suggested that we adopt the December 2014 Code as best practice. Most of the requirements of the Code is already met and our accounts software will enable a list of all payments over £100 to be produced on a monthly basis and be available as a public document. The Annual Report will have to include reference that we have met the requirements of the Transparency Code. Cllr. Swann then proposed that the Transparency Code dated December 2014 and as filed with these Minutes is adopted. This was seconded by Cllr. Hemsted and agreed.

59/14: Elections 2015:

The Clerk confirmed that the nomination forms have not yet been received. A discussion took place on how the profile of the coming elections could be raised. It was agreed that an article be included in the March newsletter. Cllr. Swann asked that all reference to the forms being available should be removed from the current information as this was misleading. He suggested that an invitation should be extended to invite people to come to talk to councillors. Cllr. Holmes felt that there should be an open session for people to attend. Cllr. Veitch stated that she would be happy to have a table outside the Vestry Hall on a Saturday. It was agreed that Saturday the 28th February would be an ideal date to coincide with the Farmers’ Market and that the time slot be from 10 am – 1 pm. Cllr. Swann confirmed he would be able to be there on that day.

The Clerk tabled the Good Councillors Guide which would be included in a pack for new councillors. She also had circulated About Us which had been produced for previous elections and she invited input from Members. Cllr. Veitch felt that the information should include reference to what the Parish Council actually does. The Clerk agreed that the text from the website could be included. She asked Cllr. Hemsted if he had any historical data on the Trinity War Memorial which could be included. Cllr. Swann brought forward minor amendments to clarify land ownership and in the Crane Valley to record the Nature Reserve separately.

60/14: Items for Information:

- a) Cllr. Hemsted informed Members that an exhibition for the proposals for the Bringloe land in Sissinghurst is being held in St. George's Institute on the 26th February from 3 pm – 7 pm.
- b) Cllr. Hemsted reported that Wynn Tremenheere had passed away and a service would be held in Trinity Church at 2 pm on the 20th February. The date and time is awaiting confirmation. He will be sorely missed, especially at the Windmill where he had been a volunteer for many years. A discussion took place generally on volunteers and Cllr. Holmes informed Members that the Museum was delighted that their article in the last Parish newsletter had drawn forward a new volunteer. The Clerk drew Member's attention to the community page in the Wealden Advertiser where organisation can promote themselves.
- c) Cllr. Holmes provided the Clerk with a quote for the Cranbrook Walks Leaflet Packs. This would be included on the next agenda.