

**MINUTES OF THE POLICY & RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT  
COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 5<sup>th</sup> MAY 2015**

**PRESENT:** Cllr. Swann (in the Chair), Cllrs. Bunyan, Holmes and Rook

**APOLOGIES:** Cllrs. Hemsted and Veitch

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.

**79/14:** Cllr. Swann informed Members that he had carried out the internal finance check for April and everything was satisfactory.

**80/14: Year End Figures:**

Cllr. Swann tabled the end of year accounts for the year 2014 - 2015 and proposed that they be agreed as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Rook and agreed by all Members.

**81/14: Statement of Assurance:**

The Chairman proposed that the Statement of Assurance for the Annual Return as read out by the Clerk, be completed as discussed. This was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed by Members.

**82/14:** The lists of payments made after the April meeting, is filed with these minutes.

**83/14:** Cheques for May were signed for payment as per the list filed with these minutes.

These included:

Policy and Resources	5,546.80
Burial and Properties	3,547.52
Environmental Management	371.03
Total	9,465.35

The Clerk tabled an invoice from TWBC in the sum of £14, 812.71 for the business rates for the car parks. It was agreed that in the absence of Cllr. Veitch that this be deferred for payment to the next meeting.

The Chairman requested authority to pay any outstanding contractors invoices prior to the June meeting. He reminded Members that this evenings meeting had been brought forward to enable payments to be made prior to the election. Cllr. Holmes seconded the proposal which was agreed by all Members.

**84/14: Review of Procedures:**

Cllr. Swann brought forward the review of financial and audit procedures, risk assessments, and policies of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council for year 2015/2016.

- a) The Clerk confirmed that she completes all the risk assessment forms following the annual site visits of all our grounds. All the work place related risk assessments such as lone working etc are all carried out as a matter of process. It was confirmed that we also undertook risk assessments for events such as litter picks and copies of these were countersigned by members who took part in the event. The Clerk tabled the financial risk assessment which Cllr. Swann carries out twice yearly. The form accords with the pro forma in the Practitioner's Guide – Appendix 9. Members were happy that all the forms were still relevant and that we were taking all necessary actions where any risk was identified.
- b) Members were happy to continue with the two signatories on cheques system and they agreed that the Financial Regulations were therefore still relevant and accurate. Every councillor will be furnished with the most current version in the information packs which will be given out at the first Full Council meeting following the election. A brief discussion took place on electronic banking and the risks that could be involved. It was agreed by Members that we would not change to electronic banking at this present time.
- c) The Audit Plan from our Kent County Council Internal Auditor had been accepted at a previous meeting. A monthly finance check is also undertaken and reported to Members as part of this Committee. Members were happy with our Audit Procedures and content that Members were kept fully informed.
- d) Cllr. Swann reminded Members that our current insurance provision will be discussed as a separate agenda item.
- e) Cllr. Swann referred to the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct. The recent amendments had been included in the current version which will also be handed out to all Members on the 21<sup>st</sup> May in the information packs. Members were happy that the Standing Orders and Code of Conduct are up to date and correct.
- f) Members were content with the Child Protection Policy and it was agreed there was no need to revise this at this time. The Deputy Clerk is reviewing all the policies whilst undertaking her training.
- g) Members were content with the Community Engagement Strategy and Training Schedule and Attendance which was produced as part of our Quality Parish Council status re-accreditation.
- h) The Employer Policy was reviewed and it was agreed by Members that this was still relevant and current.
- i) The Record Keeping and Archives Procedure was reviewed and it was agreed that this was still current.
- j) The Health and Safety Policy Statement was considered and it was agreed that this was current and relevant.
- k) Appendix 9 – An approach to internal audit testing – Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners Guide – Members agreed the schedule was being met in all areas. This was also now reflected in our Internal Audit Testing pro forma which is completed twice yearly by Cllr. Swann as mentioned previously.

**85/14: Insurance Renewal:**

Cllr. Holmes informed Members that our specialist broker Came & Company had been asked by the Clerk to obtain quotations for the renewal of our insurance policy. They had obtained quotes from Aviva (our current providers) in the sum of £9,756.36, Ecclesiastical in the sum of £9,845.00 and from Hiscox in the sum of £9,514.56. All quotes were inclusive of 6% insurance premium tax. After a full discussion it was proposed by Cllr. Holmes that we should accept the recommendation of Came & Company to continue with Aviva and enter into a three year long-term agreement which will reduce the amount payable to £9,268.54. This was seconded by Cllr. Swann and unanimously agreed. The Chairman thanked Cllr. Holmes for reading all the information to be able to report to Members.

**86/14: Quote – Crane Valley Drainage:**

The Chairman informed Members that together with the Clerk and the Parish Warden he had met a civil engineering contractor to discuss the drainage issues in the Crane Valley. Mackelden Civil Engineering who were an experienced company had suggested that trenches 5 metres apart, with porous pipe surrounded in 20mm reject stone and wrapped in terram matting and dispensing into the stream would be their recommended solution. Their quote for carrying out the works is in the sum of £11,825.00. Cllr. Veitch has sent an e mail confirming her approval of the estimate stating that it may be expensive but this has been a problem for some years and we do need to get it sorted. A full discussion took place on the issues that had contributed to the wet conditions in the Crane Valley which included broken surface water drains, natural springs and water draining down into the Valley from adjacent land. Various ad hoc drainage had been put in especially around the skate ramp but with no success.

It was proposed by Cllr. Swann to accept the quote subject to a further site visit with the Contractor for establish how the works will take place and how the contractor can guarantee the success of the drainage works. This was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed. Cllrs. Rook and Swann will meet Mr. Mackelden.

**87/14: Elections 2015:**

The Clerk confirmed that she is still awaiting confirmation from KALC on where we stand with our Quality Parish Council status by not having an election in the Cranbrook Ward of the Parish Council.

**88/14: Items for Information:**

- a) Cllr. Holmes reported that a meeting has been scheduled with core members of the Tourist Forum. This will be held on the 12<sup>th</sup> May.
- b) Cllr. Holmes suggested that a working group should be set up on how the business community can get the Town back on its feet. It is important that the Parish Council facilitates a working group which should include parish councillors, the business community and groups such as the Cranbrook Business Association. Cllr. Rook mentioned a vibrant website “into the Weald” which is run by Emma Wood. A full discussion then took place on how the Town could benefit from specialist advice and ideas.

c) Cllr. Bunyan asked if there is any news on the issue between the Co Op and TWBC or any news on the Building Preservation Notice on Cranbrook Engineering. In the absence of Cllr. Veitch, Cllr. Rook stated that there was no further news other than what Cllr. Veitch has already reported i.e. that Draft Head of Terms are being prepared between the Co Op and TWBC. He was not aware of any further progress on the BPN.

d) The Clerk confirmed to Cllr. Rook that she had met with Rod Pearson from Morrisons who had agreed to reinstate the white lining in the Jockey Lane Car Park where they had erected their hospitality unit. A general discussion took place on the lack of parking spaces in The Tanyard and Jockey Lane. This would be discussed at a future meeting.

e) The Clerk tabled a request for a tree to be planted in St. Dunstan's and which she hoped that Cllr. Hemsted would approve of. In his absence, Members felt that the amelanchier tree would be an asset within the Churchyard.

f) The Clerk reported that she had circulated a request from TWBC with the suggested name for the new development on the former Sissinghurst Primary School – Church Mews. She had to date received eight responses in favour and one against and she would therefore confirm that the Parish Council had no objection to the suggested naming.