

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON
THURSDAY 11TH JUNE 2020

The meeting was held remotely using Zoom software.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

PRESENT: Cllr. Fletcher (Chairman), Cllrs. Beck, Bunyan, Fairweather, Fermor, Gilbert, Hall (in part), Hartley, Hatcher (in part), Kings, Meewezen, Pethurst, Smith, Warne and Waters. Borough Cllr. Dawlings.

Declaration of Interests, Dispensations, Predetermination or Lobbying:

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. He notified those present that the meeting was being recorded as a Clerk's aid.

23/20: Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

The Chairman, Cllr. Fletcher proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 14th May be adopted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Meewezen and agreed.

24/20: Reopening of Cranbrook:

The Chairman thanked Cllrs. Waters, Fairweather and Smith for help in distributing the reopening packs that had been supplied by Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. They had been generally very well received from the businesses. It had been agreed not to accept the offer from KCC to implement a one-way system as it was considered unnecessary.

In response to the Chairman, Cllr. Pethurst reported there had been very few calls to the helpline number and as some of those on the rota had returned to work, we may need to consider diverting the calls to the office during office hours. No change was necessary at the present time.

25/20: Community Asset List:

The Chairman was pleased to report that all of our Borough Councillors had supported our application to nominate Jockey Lane Clinic as an Asset of Community Value. The panel met to discuss the application on Thursday 4th June and we are awaiting the outcome. Borough Cllr. Dawlings advised the support of the Borough Councillors does not ensure the application will be successful as it also depends on the NHS as the owners of the property. In response to Cllr. Fermor, Cllr Fletcher confirmed that as yet we do not even know how much floorspace is available in the building and until we can investigate further, we cannot ascertain if it could be a viable option for a community facility.

Reports from Committees:

26/20: Policy & Resources:

Cllr. Beck referred to the meeting held on 9th June and highlighted the opening of the Unity Trust Bank Account. He also highlighted the decision not to accept the quote from our insurers to increase the Fidelity Guarantee Limit as it was deemed as expensive and unwarranted. He invited questions.

Cllr. Hall applauded the decision to opt for heritage style streetlights at St David's Bridge and Waterloo Road. In response to Cllr. Pethurst, Cllr. Fletcher advised those at the top of the High Street would be replaced with the more modern style as originally quoted as they are already surrounded by a similar type of streetlight.

Cllr. Hall also referred to the purchase of the Tanyard Dental Surgery suggesting that the financial regulations had been contravened because the parishioners had not been adequately consulted over the purchase.

Cllr. Hartley also raised concern over the purchase. The Chairman reiterated his belief that Cllr. Hartley should be declaring an interest if he wanted to be part of the discussion because his family own the adjacent land and he believed Cllr. Hartley had been in discussion with the owner to purchase the land himself. Cllr. Hartley denied any interest and although he been in discussion with the owner, he never had any intention of purchasing the land.

A full discussion followed on what constituted 'adequate consultation'. The Clerk advised that in her opinion, the regulations had been adhered to and the information that the Parish Council were intending to purchase the Tanyard Dental Surgery had been in the public domain for some time. Cllr. Gilbert stated that he has spoken to several parishioners to seek their opinion on the purchase and suggested that other councillors would have done the same. He had not received any negative comments in relation to the purchase. Cllr. Warne questioned why Cllrs. Hall and Hartley were raising these issues at such a late stage, if they were concerned at the level of consultation why had they not raised it before?

In response to Cllr. Hartley the Chairman confirmed a quote for demolition which included the removal of asbestos had been received, further quotes would also be sought.

Cllr. Beck proposed adoption of the minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Gilbert and agreed. Cllr. Hartley abstained from the vote and requested this be recorded.

27/20: Planning & Preservation Management:

Cllr. Smith advised the next meeting was scheduled for 16th June at 9.15am.

28/20: Properties and Burial Grounds:

Cllr. Gilbert advised that Cllr. Waters was joining the Committee. He advised Members that a claim for loss of revenue from the Vestry Hall during the pandemic had been submitted. The insurance company had logged the claim, but no decision on whether claims such as this would be paid out until a decision is made globally as to whether Covid 19 is covered.

29/20: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather advised the next meeting was scheduled for 30th June. In response to Cllr. Fletcher the Clerk confirmed that tree safety reports had already been included as an agenda item.

30/20: Neighbourhood Development Plan:

Cllr. Warne advised that a remote meeting was scheduled for Monday 29th June. The group still need to look at the vision and design codes. We have been advised by Debbie Dixon of TWBC that we will need to look at alternative methods of public consultation going forward. Cllr. Warne had spoken to David Carlisle from AECOM, who is ready to support us when necessary.

Following comments from Natural England, the Turnden application could be called in to the Secretary of State, on the grounds that it is a major application in the AONB and an alternative site could potentially be found elsewhere. Cllr. Hatcher reported that Berkeley Homes had responded to the S106 application submitted by the Parish Council, stating they were not in favour of any of our proposals as we had not proven our case.

31/20: Clerk's Report:

The Clerk reported that the Literature Festival had now been postponed until 17th and 18th September 2021.

The Clerk was also very pleased to report that the Kent Association of Local Councils had confirmed that the Regional Accreditation Panel for the Local Council Award Scheme were of the unanimous opinion that Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council's application for re-accreditation to the Quality Level Award met all the criteria and was therefore successful. The Clerks were congratulated on achieving the award.

32/20: Correspondence:

A letter of thanks had been received from Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance for the donation of £250 towards maintaining the service.

A letter had also been received from Cranbrook Museum thanking the Parish Council for awarding them the grant to update their IT equipment.

33/20: Reports from Borough Councillors:

a) Cllr. Dawlings confirmed that residents that had signed up for the Garden Waste Service would be automatically compensated by the Borough Council by delaying their renewal date.

He also reported on how much in total had been given out by the Borough Council in Business and Discretionary Grants. There would be a briefing for councillors tomorrow on the financial position of the Council, there are losses of approximately £1m per month which cannot be sustained indefinitely. This year was going to be a struggle.

b) Cllr. Warne reported that she had been involved in the Planning Policy Working Group which is looking at the amendments being made in response to comments received on the Draft Local Plan. They have also been looking at the air quality assessments taken at Hawkhurst Crossroads which could have an impact on major planning applications in this Parish.

She also advised that some Members were still experiencing technical difficulties in attending the meetings remotely, which meant they were taking much longer. In response to Cllr. Bunyan, she would seek confirmation that no major applications would be discussed until the Committee are able to meet in person

34/20: Items for Information:

a) Cllr. Hartley referred to the pro bono advice being offered on the Community Centre that had been mentioned in the Policy & Resources minutes. He suggested the Council should treat any advice received free, with extreme caution.

b) Cllr. Waters advised that the Cranbrook Music Festival originally scheduled for September this year had been postponed until next May.

c) Cllr. Fletcher advised that the recruitment process of finding another Deputy Clerk had restarted.

The meeting was closed.

There were no questions from members of the public attending.