

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, VESTRY HALL, CRANBROOK
ON THURSDAY 12TH DECEMBER 2019.**

PRESENT: Cllr. Fletcher (in the Chair), Cllrs. Beck, Bunyan, Clifford, Fairweather, Fermor, Gilbert, Hartley, Hatcher, Kings, Pethurst, Smith and Warne.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Hall.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and 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. He notified those present that the meeting was being recorded as a Clerk's aid.

107/19: Minutes of the Previous Meeting to be confirmed:

Cllr. Fletcher proposed that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14th November 2019 be adopted as a true record. This was seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed.

108/19: Co-Option of Parish Councillor:

Following the resignation of Bridget Veitch, a vacancy on the Parish Council had occurred. Due process had been followed, no call for an election had been made. A casual vacancy had been advertised. There had been three expressions of interest received. Cllr. Fletcher thanked all three candidates for putting their names forward. They were asked to speak for three to four minutes and too include what they saw as the three main challenges the Parish Council face and what they thought they could bring to the role. All the candidates spoke eloquently and passionately about Cranbrook & Sissinghurst.

Members were issued with ballot papers and asked to indicate whom they would like to co-opt. The vote was counted by the Clerks, who advised the Chair that Wendy Waters was the successful candidate; she was invited to sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and took a place at the table.

Cllr. Warne congratulated the newly co-opted member and hoped the other two candidates would involve themselves in some of the Council's current projects. She advised there was an NDP Steering Group meeting next week and encouraged them to attend.

109/19: Presentation to Bridget Veitch:

Cllr. Fletcher presented Mrs. Veitch with a framed picture of Cranbrook High Street and thanked her for the dedication and hard work she had given to the Parish Council. She thanked everyone for their support during her time as Chairman.

110/19: Governance of Community Centre:

Cllr. Fletcher referred to a document that had been circulated to Members which gave an update on the project and as of January 2020, how the project could be managed going forward. The original steering group's aim of securing the access and transfers of land had been achieved. The overarching agreement had been signed on 4th December which was a major step. He thanked Cllr. Gilbert and Mrs. Veitch for their help in reading through all the contracts and agreements. Once all the documents were signed, we would own a single plot of land from the Tanyard Dental Surgery to the public toilets in Crane Lane.

We would need to discuss the future of the toilets as when the development of the new housing starts a new sewer would be put in which would not be connected to the existing toilets. The future of public toilet provision would be on the next agenda.

He had spoken to Guy Johnson who had indicated that he may look to develop the site himself or he may sell it on. Savills will be marketing it after Christmas. We will need to work with whoever develops it. Cllr. Fletcher would keep Members well informed. He will Chair the steering group going forward, but would rely on other Members and stakeholders to take charge of individual work themes.

He stated that we would be as open and transparent as possible, however there would be occasions when some items would need to be discussed confidentially.

He referred to the Standing Orders and reiterated that Members should not disclose confidential information.

111/19: Chairman's Report:

The Chairman advised that Stephen Baughen – Head of Planning Policy at TWBC had been to every parish following the responses to the Draft Local Plan. A meeting of the NDP Steering Group was planned for next Tuesday, which would focus on the way forward.

In response to an article in the last edition of Parish Cake, Phil Mummery had written to the Chairman stating it was a good idea for Cranbrook to have its own Mayor. He offered to fund the purchase of mayoral chains, although he did not wish to be considered for the role himself.

The Chairman commented on the amazing success of the recent Christmas Fair.

Reports from Committees:

112/19: Policy & Resources:

Cllr. Beck referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December, highlighting the discussion on budgets. He invited questions, as none were raised, he proposed adoption of the minutes. This was seconded by Cllr. Fairweather and agreed. All the budgets had been circulated to Members, both in hard copy and electronically.

113/19: Planning & Preservation Management:

Cllr. Bunyan referred to the minutes of the meetings held on 19th November and 3rd December and invited questions. None were raised.

114/19: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November and invited questions. In response to Cllr. Bunyan's question on item 20/19, Cllr. Fletcher confirmed that the Chairman of Cranbrook Sports Club had accepted an invitation to the Full Council meeting in January to discuss their aspirations and how the Parish and Sports Club can work together for the greater benefit of the community.

In response to item 21/19 (c) Cllr. Smith confirmed he was still awaiting a response from Gary Stevenson as to whether any pollution monitoring was being carried out in the Borough. Cllr. Fairweather proposed adoption of the minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Kings and agreed.

115/19: Burials & Properties:

Cllr. Clifford advised the next meeting was scheduled for the new year.

116/19: Neighbourhood Development Plan:

Cllr. Warne gave a report of the meeting held on 25th November and invited questions. In response to Cllr. Clifford's question on affordable housing, Cllr. Pethurst gave the government's definition of the term.

Cllr. Gilbert advised Members that in meetings already taking place with developers, representatives of the community were pushing to ensure all developments are built to a high standard. A recent report written by Liz Daley highlighting concerns would be circulated. Cllr. Bunyan felt the time allowed to submit comments in respect of the Berkeley Homes application should be extended.

117/19: Reports from Delegates:

a) CCAAC:

Cllr. Hatcher referred to the minutes of the last meeting which had been circulated to all Members. He referred to the discussions on historic plaques and advised that CCAAC were to seek permission from property owners to erect plaques and fully cost the project before coming back to the Parish Council for funding. The unsightly railings on The Hill raised at the Cranbrook in Bloom judging will be raised with County Cllr. Sean Holden as they are responsibility of KCC Highways.

Cllr. Fletcher read out the following reports as provided by our representative Graham Holmes.

b) Cranbrook Tourism Group:

The next meeting of the Group will take place on the 15th January at The Hive commencing at 10.00am.

c) Transport Accessibility Group:

A meeting was held in Hawkhurst on the 6th December. KCC have reported that the tendering process for the 297 service has begun and will conclude in April. A document entitled, "Transport Strategy for the South East" was tabled and members will be discussing its contents at the next meeting due on the 21st February 2020. It is being promoted by 'Transport for the South East', a collaboration of mostly County Councils and service providers.

c) Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group:

The Group held its Annual General Meeting on the 10th December and all current officers were re-elected. The next full meeting will be held on the 28th January 2020 in Goudhurst commencing at 1.30pm.

The Group would like to thank Cranbrook & Sissinghurst Parish Council for the use of the Council Chamber for its AGM

118/19: Clerk's Report:

The Clerk advised that Cllr. Clifford has requested, that she read 14a of our Standing Orders and that she as Clerk and Proper Officer to the Council, make Members aware that a councillor had submitted a complaint against a fellow councillor, which has subsequently been dismissed by the Monitoring Officer.

Cllrs. Fermor and Clifford read out personal statements regarding this complaint for the information of fellow councillors. They felt the current Code of Conduct complaints procedure required revision.

Cllr. Fletcher reiterated to those present that the statements read were personal statements and **not** those of the Parish Council. He went on to say that he hoped that if anyone felt they were being bullied they could approach him with their concerns. If they felt they could not go to him then to approach the Clerk or Vice Chairman.

119/19: Correspondence:

The Clerk advised that we had received letters from the Chairman of King George's Playing Field Trust and the Chief Executive of Citizen's Advice thanking us for the grants we had recently awarded them.

120/19: Reports from Borough Councillors:

Borough Cllr. Fairweather reported there was still a problem with missed bin collections in the rural area. This is being taken seriously by TWBC and huge fines are being levied on the service provider, Urbaser. He stressed that any complaints that are not being dealt with should be brought to the attention of the respective Borough Councillor.

He also reported on the state of management, cleanliness and equipment at the Weald Leisure Centre. This has been referred to the County Councillor who will continue to seek the improvements required.

Borough Cllr. Warne advised she had attended a recent planning meeting and although the Draft Local Plan has been published, until it is adopted an increase in speculative development applications is expected, as currently the borough still do not have a five year land supply.

121/19: Items for Information:

a) Cllr. Clifford referred the public consultation being held by Berkeley Homes next week at the Weald Sports Centre. Cllr. Pethurst encouraged all Members to attend. Cllr. Bunyan reminded Members that they should not predetermine any applications before they have formally been submitted.

b) Cllr. Clifford asked for volunteers to join the website development working group. Offers from Cllrs. Hatcher and Pethurst were gratefully accepted.

c) Cllr. Hatcher reminded everyone that the COD's production of Treasure Island would run from 28th – 31st December and tickets are still available.

d) Cllr. Smith reported that discussions to secure the new Village Hall were ongoing and it was likely the £10,000 put aside by CSPC for the project, may soon be required. He would be circulating a briefing paper to all Members shortly. He also advised that the St George's Christmas drinks party was tomorrow night from 6-8pm and everyone was welcome.

The meeting was closed.

Questions were invited from the public. A parishioner voiced his pleasure that the Community Centre project was finally gaining momentum. He also advised that the Parish Council needed to appoint some new representatives to the Katharine Elizabeth Wood Charity to comply with their constitution.

Another parishioner wished everyone a Merry Christmas and encouraged them to attend the Choral Society's Christmas Concert on 21st December, all proceeds were going towards the lighting project in the Church.

A question was raised regarding the Winter Strategy which had recently been publicised on our website. It was confirmed the Parish would not be paying for professional snow clearing.

A parishioner voiced her disappointment that the discussions regarding the Code of Conduct complaints procedure had been raised at this meeting, she felt the issue should have been discussed in a confidential session.