

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL HELD IN
THE PARISH ROOM, SISSINGHURST,
ON THURSDAY 14TH MARCH 2019**

PRESENT: Cllr. Veitch (in the Chair) Cllrs. Beck, Bunyan, Clifford, Cook, Fairweather, Fermor, Hartley, Holmes, Kemp (in part) Smith, Swann, and Warne. Borough Cllr. Dawlings.

APOLOGIES: Cllr. Fletcher. Borough Cllrs. Hannam and Holden.

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

A minute's silence in memory of Jane Nettle, a stalwart of the Sissinghurst community, whose presence would be greatly missed was observed.

209/18: Minutes of the Previous Meeting:

Cllr. Veitch referred to the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 14th February 2019 and proposed adoption as a true record. The proposal was seconded by Cllr. Cook and agreed.

210/18: Chairman's Report:

The Chairman reported that in February she and Cllr. Swann had undertaken a tour of the Regal car park with representatives from Cranbrook in Bloom and the Kent High Weald Partnership. They were looking at the landscape areas to assess what improvements could be made, particularly as the South East in Bloom judges suggested that improvements should be made. The notes from the visit have been sent to the Chairman of the Environmental Management Committee. In response to a question from Cllr. Cook, Cllr. Veitch confirmed that it had been agreed that some areas would benefit from the removal of untidy growth and intelligent pruning of some of the trees.

She had attended the Parish Chairmans meeting earlier this week. One presentation was on Code of Conduct, and the government report released earlier this year.

Tunbridge Wells have 20k knitted poppies. They plan to undertake a ceremonial burial of these around the borough, with a plaque, perhaps to tie in with the June anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles. Tunbridge Wells will ask for £1k contribution from the parish, if the parish wants poppies buried on their site.

The 'purdah' pre-election period starts on Monday. She has a hard copy of a short guide should anyone like to see it. Primarily, council resources must not be used to promote any candidate or political party, although parish business continues as usual. She had investigated whether we are legally allowed to put on our website details of those nominated for the Parish Council when they are confirmed. The answer is yes, but all details must be strictly factual. Clearly the Parish Council cannot be held responsible for the accuracy of these facts, a disclaimer confirming this would need to be included.

The Saturday refuse vehicle will not collect garden waste, on the assumption that everyone with garden waste will have chosen to have a new black bin. She did not know when it will stop collecting garden waste or whether it meant that the refuse vehicle will now collect general waste on every visit, or that the number of visits will be halved. The brown bin waste collections will continue until the end of September, and the new black bin collections will now start the following week. Previously it had been suggested that there would be a gap. On Saturday 11th May 11-1pm there will be a display of the new services in the Regal car park.

She had been advised that Kent County Council was completing a map of the rural broadband facilities, which should be finished by June.

We have been unable to agree a date for a visit from the Police Commissioner to visit Cranbrook and have been informed that he is not diarising anything until after the end of June due to BREXIT.

The Chairman reiterated that the closing date for parish council nominations is 4pm Wednesday 3rd April. Papers must be delivered by hand to the Town Hall and not the Parish Office.

Reports from Committees:

211/18: Policy & Resources:

Cllr. Swann was pleased to report that if everyone looked at their council tax bills that had recently arrived they would notice there was a reduction in what residents pay for the precept.

He referred to the minutes of the meeting held on 12th March and invited questions. Cllr. Holmes queried item 138/18, the grant application received from Cranbrook Museum for the purchase of a watercolour. He asked what the Committee had considered had needed clarification in the application. It was explained that the accounts had shown the purchase of a painting by F.D Hardy in January 2018, however the application was for the purchase of a painting by the same artist. Members had wanted to clarify if the application referred to another painting. Cllr. Holmes offer to seek the clarification on behalf of the Committee was gratefully accepted. Cllr. Swann proposed adoption of the minutes, this was seconded by Cllr. Bunyan and agreed.

212/18: Planning & Preservation Management:

Cllr. Bunyan gave a report on the meetings held on 19th February and 5th March. She advised that the application for 44 dwellings 19/00308/FULL, Sissinghurst Road had been deferred until the next meeting, which had been scheduled for 19th March at the later than usual time of 3pm.

Cllr. Smith referred to the application for the 9 self-build homes on Common Road that the Parish Council had recommended for approval. He wanted to know if the comments submitted by Cllr. Warne for the NDP, objecting to the application were on behalf of the Parish Council. Because the opinion of the Planning Committee had differed significantly from the NDP, concerns were raised that the work of the NDP in conducting the site assessments, had been undermined. Cllr. Bunyan reiterated that the decision had been taken democratically with the information available at the time. A great deal of discussion followed on how submitting conflicting comments could be avoided in the future, with several suggestions put forward on how the process could be improved.

In response to Cllr. Holmes, Cllr. Bunyan confirmed that the application for conversion of existing roof space at Crane Chambers was to provide additional floor space for the growing business.

213/18: Burials & Properties:

Cllr. Clifford referred to information in the Sissinghurst Parish Magazine that had stated that flooding in Sissinghurst Cemetery had been made worse by infilling of wet land during the construction of Church Mews. This was incorrect and he had submitted a letter for publication disputing this.

Cllr. Cook commented on the safety handrail in St. Dunstan's Churchyard which now installed, was being appreciated by many churchgoers and parishioners. The excellent work of the contractor Cranbrook Iron was applauded.

214/18: Environmental Management:

Cllr. Fairweather advised that the next meeting was scheduled for 5pm on the 19th March in the Addison room. He also advised that litter picks had been arranged for Saturday 30th March at 9.30am, meeting outside the White Horse for Cranbrook and at the Milk House for Sissinghurst. Protective equipment and pickers would be provided.

215/18: Neighbourhood Plan:

Cllr. Warne gave a report of the meeting held on 25th February. She advised that a meeting with Steve Baughen – Head of Planning at TWBC had been rescheduled for 28th March to discuss how the NDP and Local Plan can both nominate sites in parallel. She had also engaged the services of a technical facilitator from AECOM to help us with that meeting.

She reported a good turnout at the two days of site assessment workshops when all the 54 sites being assessed were looked at. They are now working out the best way to score those in terms of moving from the traffic light system of red, amber and green to putting weighting on those scorings using evidence gathered from Neighbourhood Plan public engagement meetings. Sites that are then put forward will undergo a Strategic Environmental Assessment which will be carried out by AECOM. Once they have been completed we will have a clear idea which sites can be focused on and start writing site specific policies for as part of the Regulation 14 draft in the summer, giving a six week period of public consultation for people to give their views.

In response to Cllr. Clifford, Cllr. Warne confirmed that TWBC are still requesting that allocation numbers are kept confidential. This has raised concerns around transparency.

Cllr. Swann expressed gratitude to Cllr. Warne and her team for the enormous amount of work they are undertaking.

Reports from Delegates:

216/18: Cranbrook Conservation Area Advisory Committee:

Cllr. Bunyan advised the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 27th March.

217/18: Age Concern:

Cllr. Warne reported that she had been unable to attend the last meeting but had received information that the organisation was in the process of updating its constitution.

218/18: Cranbrook Museum:

Cllr. Holmes advised the next meeting was scheduled for 26th March.

219/18: Transport Accessibility Group:

Cllr. Holmes reported that since the last meeting held on the 26th February he had received some complaints from Parishioners that senior citizen's bus passes were not being accepted on the 297 service to Tunbridge Wells due to a timetable change. He has written to KCC asking them to address the situation, but is yet to receive a response. Cllr. Cook, stated that as a service user himself, this had not been his experience.

220/18: Hop Pickers Line Heritage Group:

Cllr. Holmes reported that he had attended the meeting on 26th February. He clarified that the organiser of the 'Summer Walks' is the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty not the High Weald Landscape Trail as he had previously suggested. The Heritage Group will be participating with a circular walk around Goudhurst in September which will take walkers to sites associated with the railway.

A separate walk in conjunction with Heritage Open days is likely to be postponed due to the Department of Transport raising a number of issues about access to Badgers Oak Tunnel.

221/18: Cranbrook Tourism Group:

Cllr. Holmes advised the next meeting is scheduled for 20th March. In the meantime the group have released its first promotion of Cranbrook & Sissinghurst in the latest TWBC publication 'Local' and are looking to repeat the coverage in the Wealden Advertiser. They will be approaching the Parish Council to request financial support for this.

222/18: KALC:

Cllr. Veitch reported that she had recently attended an area Chairman's meeting at which speeding was discussed, the use of average speed cameras was recommended as a deterrent.

The TWBC draft Local Plan is expected to be available at the end of May

The status of the parishes NDPs was described as follows:

- Brenchley are considering redevelopment of their Primary School, and development plans of the triangle with Copper Lane. Brenchley and Matfield have draft policies and are about to draft their plan
- Benenden is now having informal consultation on their plan
- Goudhurst have their draft plan out for consultation
- Hawkhurst have completed their first review of their NDP, and have not made any changes to policies. They will change their review schedule to every two years.
- Horsmonden have appointed a consultant.
- Lamberhurst draft plan is expected to be out for consultation in April.

223/18: Clerk's Report:

There were no issues to report.

224/18: Correspondence:

Letters had been received from Home Start South West Kent and St. Dunstan's Messy Church thanking the Parish Council for the financial support recently provided and pledged.

225/18: Items for Information:

Cllr. Veitch advised of the following forthcoming events:

- Saturday 16th March the Wellbeing Fair is being held in the Vestry Hall 9.30am-12pm
- Saturday 23rd March the Windmill is looking for volunteers to help clean 10am-12pm
- Sunday 24th March the Rugby Club are hosting the U9 Kent Rugby Festival
- Friday 29th March there is a Persimmons exhibition for the development of the land at Brick Kiln Farm is being held in the Vestry Hall from 2.30-7.30pm.
- Wednesday 24th April, the Annual Parish Meeting is being in the Vestry Hall, Cranbrook at 7.30pm.

She also expressed thanks to Cllr. Clifford and his team for another successful edition of Parish Cake.

Cllr. Bunyan added that Persimmon had invited the Planning Committee and any other Councillors that would like to attend to a pre meeting with Persimmon at 1pm in the Weald Information Centre.

Cllr. Bunyan advised that the Sissinghurst Flower Show was being held at 2.30pm on Saturday 23rd March at Sissinghurst Primary School.

Cllr. Swann reported that the Windmill completed two hours of milling yesterday. It would be open in two weeks' time for the summer season and they were looking for volunteer stewards.

Cllr. Smith advised that the St. George's AGM would be held on 25th April at 7.30pm, when the proposals for the new Village Hall will be presented. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Cllr. Cook encouraged all members to respond to the invitation from the Tanyard and Golding Dental Group to celebrate their first anniversary. Cllr. Fairweather felt that as it was immediately prior to our next Full Council meeting, all Members should make an effort to attend.

Cllr. Warne advised she would be attending a KALC Planning Conference with the Deputy Clerk tomorrow.

226/18: Reports from Borough and County Councillors:

Report from Cllr. Dawlings:

Cllr. Dawlings referred to the 'Local' publication that has gone out to all households in the Borough. The latest edition features a double page article on the new refuse contract.

He advised of a recent meeting with Police Commander Pepper which he remarked humorously, at one stage would have been known as Sergeant Pepper!

The meeting was closed.

Questions from Members of the Public:

A query was raised on the type of housing proposed for the 44 houses in Sissinghurst that the Parish Council are due to consider at their next planning meeting.

In response to the loss of a litter bin following a road traffic accident in The Street, Sissinghurst, the Clerk agreed to contact TWBC to request a replacement.

A parishioner thanked KCC for the cleaning of the road signs around Sissinghurst but would like to see the white lines improved. Cllr. Veitch advised that this had been one of the requests sent to Cllr. Mike Whiting in our Road Transport Plan. Another parishioner was advised that all councillors had been invited to put their priorities forward for the Road Transport Plan including those that sit on the NDP.

There was a further question regarding the removal of a litter bin by Cranbrook Primary School, the Parishioner was advised that it had been removed at the explicit request of the School.

A concern was raised at the alleged poor driving of a student in Jockey Lane Car Park, it was requested that the Parish Council write to the Headmaster asking him to advise any new drivers of their responsibilities to others.

A member of the NDP Steering Group referred to recent work on the site assessments. He also queried the allocation of S106 monies towards bus services for the Common Road development.

A parishioner advised that they were not receiving a copy of Parish Cake, Cllr. Clifford offered to take this up with Royal Mail.