

PLUCKLEY PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON JANUARY 18TH 2016

Present

Chris Housman- Chairman
Martin Newman – Vice Chairman
Sue Beattie
Tim O'Connor
Cllr Clair Bell (Ashford BC)

Paul Smith
Carol Washer
Mike Whatman
Graham Smith (Clerk)
Also present 1 Parishioner

1 Apologies for absence

None.

2 The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2015 were approved and signed by the Chairman. There were no alterations to members Register of Interests or Declarations of Pecuniary Interests

3 Public Session

The member of the public present raised concerns about the potential development of the old brickworks site. These were noted by the Council.

4 Chairman's report

The Chairman had attended the quarterly monthly meeting of KALC's Ashford Group. He reported that ABC is now taking stricter enforcement action on inappropriate parking of lorries.

Chris reported that he was now commencing the process of recruiting a new Parish Clerk, as Graham is 'retiring' at the end of March.

5 Planning

The Chairman had attended the Appeal hearing at ABC regarding Alex Gwillim's appeal against refusal of planning permission to build a house on his property adjacent to his garage business. The Planning Inspector was very thorough, and also undertook a site visit. The outcome should be known by the end of January. *[The PC supported the appeal if the pillars each side of the front door were removed and so long as house ownership was tied to the garage business]*. Clair Bell reported that she also supported the applicant, as he had clearly been given to understand by the Planning Committee that a suitable property would be permitted.

Clair reported that she had spoken to Richard Alderton (ABC) about the biomass installation at Stanford Bridge Farm, to express the PC concern at increased lorry movements, and the fact that this had not been considered by ABC in agreeing the application.

Paul Smith agreed to write to ABC about the fact that our wishes had also been ignored regarding our request for screening around the photo-voltaic array at 1 The Grove. The Chairman agreed to email the residents concerned (Mr and Mrs Taylor) requesting that some screening be provided.

The proposed new fence in front of Pluckley village school has been agreed by ABC (the PC had considered it to be too high). Martin reported that the height would be considered by the school Governors at their next meeting

Application 16/00011, Woodstock (New House Lane) – Erection of a 2-story side extension - was discussed and supported by the PC. Paul Smith would communicate this to ABC.

Brickworks Site

Martin reported that the revised application for 25 new homes (with 4 being smaller 2/3 bed houses) was likely to be considered at ABC's February Planning Committee meeting. It was agreed that the PC would not support any street lighting unless it was at 'low level'.

Any agreed permission would include a 'Section 106' agreement providing a financial contribution from the Developer to support local projects (there was an approved list of categories). It was agreed that the PC would put forward Traffic Calming, Village Hall insulation/cladding and extension to the village hall on a work in kind basis as suitable projects.

Mr and Mrs Taylor, residents of 1 The Grove, had emailed Councillors to emphasise the need to protect and enhance biodiversity on the part of the site that would not be developed. They recommended involving Kent Wildlife Trust as advisors in this respect.

6 Ashford BC report

Clair reported that ABC was now in the top 10% of Councils for its Recycling.

Detailed proposals for the creation of new Junction 10a of the M20 (and changes to J10) will be available for public consultation from 27th January to 17th March.

ABC supported the proposed M20 lorry Park at Stanford (off J11) and would prefer it to be available for use at all times (ie not just for 'Operation Stack').

An 'Electoral Review' of Ashford BC's Ward boundaries and elected Councillors is being undertaken by the Local Government Boundary Commission, this could impact on some Ward boundaries and local Councillors at the elections in 2019.

In its preliminary draft budget ABC had proposed an increase in council tax of 1.99% for 2016-7, influenced by continued reductions in funding from central government, inflationary pressures (in particular increases in staff National Insurance contributions) and a decrease in council house rents of 1%. Despite this, Ashford's council tax would remain the lowest in Kent.

7 Neighbourhood Plan

Martin reported that the draft had been sent to Simon Cole (ABC), who had commented that some of the aspirations expressed were not planning issues. Some redrafting with the help of Clair Wright (our Consultant) would be necessary. The report will be launched at a public meeting for the 6 week consultation period.

It was agreed that a Parish Meeting would be held on Wednesday 10th February (in the Village Hall) to inform residents about this public consultation.

8 Traffic and Highways

Sue reported that cutting back of overhanging foliage has now been carried out at the junction of the Street and Forge Hill, which has improved visibility for traffic leaving The Street.

There were still ongoing issues regarding the drainage on Forge Hill, and Sue was continuing to press KCC for action.

The drainage problem causing a 'lake' at the end of Dering Close has now been rectified, but the road surface is in a poor state. Sue would clarify with KCC if the problem was on KCC land, or on private land (as The Close is 'unadopted').

Discussion continued regarding ownership of the three village bus shelters – our latest advice points to KCC. Clair Bell would try to assist in establishing ownership. In any event, some urgent work is required on the shelter in Egerton Road.

Tim reported that he was pursuing our need for the extension of the 30mph zone, and our County Councillor was on board. Based on experience elsewhere, it is likely that the required 'calming' measures (interactive signs, gates etc) would involve the PC in considerable expense (possibly of £20k plus). It was agreed, however, that this was something that was universally supported by residents and should be pursued.

9 Village Hall

Chris reported that Bookings were satisfactory, but there was always scope for more.

The Village Hall Committee had reported that an electrical test was now due, however, Councillors did not recollect this being a requirement. Chris would pursue this.

There was nothing to report on the extension, where there are currently only two builders in the running for the contract.

The Village Hall Committee had rejected the suggestion that provision of broadband in the Hall would be an asset in attracting bookings. However, the PC disagreed and resolved to fund a Broadband connection. Chris would investigate practical issues and report back.

10 Recreation Ground Sports Pavilion & Tennis Courts

Nothing to report this time

11 Safety and Security

Nothing to report this time

12 Environment

Carol Washer reported that some paper waste had been delivered to the some fields off Dowle Street, but no offensive smells had been reported.

13 Website and Communications

Carol explained that she had received two quotes from Dewar Green and Captivewebs. The other local web designer recommended by our hosting site is no longer operating. The PC resolved to use Dewar Green to redesign the website as they have had considerable experience in creating websites for other villages including Bethersden. Carol agree to set up a meeting to get the ball rolling as a new site is a priority in view of the difficulties with the current one.

14 Finance

The cheques were approved and signed as per the attached annex.

The Chairman reported that he had reviewed the Insurance claims for the Pavilion and the theft of the trailer, and that he would be clarifying and pursuing these with Zurich as they were awaiting some information from the PC.

15 Precept and budget for 2016

The Chairman had circulated a spreadsheet showing the draft Budget for 2016-7 and showing the expenditure so far for 2015-6. Although day-to-day Council expenditure was well under control, and the Bank Accounts were healthy, the PC has lost over £4,000 in funding from ABC.

It was also clear that there could be further major expenditure on the Village Hall (as construction costs were higher than anticipated), and on traffic management and calming measures – which could possibly involve the PC in expenditure of around £25k.

Although grants would be sought where possible, the PC concluded that an increase in the Precept would be prudent. After further discussion on amounts, it was resolved (with one abstention) to request a Precept of **£44,000** for 2016-7 (an increase of 29% - £10,000 from £34,000).

16 Correspondence

Mike Whatman outlined some information from the Charity's Commission regarding the 'Hills & Unknown Donors' Charity that provides financial donations to the 'poor of the Parish'. There are four Trustees (all village residents), and in the past the PC had been involved in the appointment of Trustees. However, it was unclear what its current involvement should be. The Chairman agreed to clarify the situation and report back.

There were no other items of correspondence needing the attention of Councillors.

17 Honorary Resident of the Year

The Chairman stated that it was necessary for the PC to decide on this year's recipient so that the name could be put forward to the KALC Community Award process. Three names had been put forward by residents. After discussion on the merits of each candidate, a vote was taken and the unanimous decision was that the award should go to **Judy Pool** for her work on the Village Hall Committee, the Quilt & Craft Show and, above all, Pluckley Panto Unlimited – a real community event. The Chairman would inform Judy and submit her name to KALC.

18 Dates

The next PC Meeting is on Monday 15th February at 7:30pm in the Village Hall.

Graham Smith

Parish Clerk.

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**THE COUNCIL APPROVED THE FOLLOWING PAYMENTS AT ITS MEETING ON
18th JANUARY 2015**

£429	Clerks salary *	One cheque
£12.96	Postage stamps (2 books) *	One cheque
£84.20	Clerks tax to HMRC	
£90	D Heasman, street sweeping	
£45	J Johns, Recreation ground tidying	
£31	C Hoad, bus shelter sweeping	

The following Village Hall cheques were signed (on behalf of the Village Hall Committee)

£122	S Exell, Keyholders wages
£82.53	Initial Hygiene (now on quarterly billing)