

Minutes of the Newenden Annual Parish Meeting on 20 March in the village hall at 7.30 pm

Present:

Mr A Nilson (chairman)

Kent County Council

Councillor Mr M Hill

Newenden Parish Council

Councillors Mrs R Edmonds, Mrs C Baker, Mrs E Hannavy-Cousen

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

There were 31 residents of the village present.

#### **Apologies for absence**

1. Apologies for absence were received from:

Ashford Borough Council

Councillor Mr M Bennett

Newenden Parish Council

Councillor Mr D Richardson

#### Residents

Mrs & Ms Cole, Mr & Mrs Livesey, Mr & Mrs McKinlay, Mr & Mrs C Turnbull, Mrs Nilson.

#### **Minutes of the Meeting on 28 March 2017**

2. Having been previously circulated the minutes of the meeting on 28 March 2017 were approved as a correct record.

#### **Report from Kent County Council**

3. Kent County Councillor Mike Hill reported that the County Council had had a very difficult financial year, but had been able to set a balanced budget for the forthcoming year and managed to maintain services. He anticipated that the following year 2020-21 would again be very difficult but after that he thought that the financial pressures would ease. Council tax would rise by 3% plus an adult social care increase of 2%.

4. The recent severe cold weather period had caused problems particularly for the County Council Highways Department who had had a very busy time. The cold weather problems had been compounded during the subsequent thaw by a water shortage. An additional £2 million had been found for the repair of potholes and work would begin on 1 April.

5. In the coming year the Turner Prize for contemporary art had been awarded to Margate and he expected that this would provide a considerable developmental boost. In the summer there would also be an Open Golf championship at Sandwich.

#### **Report from Ashford Borough Council**

6. The chairman said that Ashford Borough Councillor Mike Bennett was unable to attend the meeting but had sent a written report. Following local meetings with adjoining parishes about transport services the Borough Council had agreed to fund a community mini bus service which would be administered by Rolvenden Parish Council. This would provide regular services to Tenterden so that residents could go shopping and attend appointments with doctors and dentists. Rolvenden Parish Council would explore whether other parishes would also like to participate in the service.

7. Councillor Bennett strongly supported plans for a new village hall and would do all he could to help turn these into reality. There were some planning difficulties which he was working with officials from the Borough Council to resolve. Councillor Bennett had recently made a members grant to the Parish Council to enable maintenance work on the children's playground.

8. Finally, Councillor Bennett commented on the strong community spirit in the village. The Borough Council was again making Civic Awards and he hoped that a resident would be nominated to receive one.

#### **Police report**

9. The chairman said that nobody from the police was available. There had however, been another change of personnel and a different PCSO appointed.

#### **Report from Newenden Parish Council**

10. The chairman reported that the Parish Council was proposing to appoint a village caretaker to undertake work previously done by both the Borough and the Parish Council. A tender advertisement had been placed in the Wealden Ad for the position. It would be funded by a contribution from Ashford Borough Council who would no longer be doing the work and the Parish Council. However, the Parish Council would need to draw on their reserves and a further source of funding would have to be found for future years. During the year an oak tree next to the children's playground had shed a large branch and because the tree was unsound had had to be felled. The branches had been sawn up and some planks would eventually be installed in the new village hall. The defibrillator stored in the White Hart had recently had to be used and the Council was obtaining replacement parts for it.

11. The Parish Council had pressed hard for the installation of fibre broadband and Open Reach had now installed a new cabinet so that the village could have fast fibre broadband.

12. The Ashford Borough Council dog warden had recently provided some new dog fouling signs and these would be put up shortly. There was a serious problem of dog fouling in the parish particularly

by those from outside who walked their dogs along the footpath by the river. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen explained that not to clean up after your dog carried a fine of £1,000.

13. The precept had remained unchanged this coming year but an increase next year was very likely. This was because the tax base was shrinking and there would be reductions in the Council Tax Support and Concurrent Functions grants. At the same time there would also be an increase in costs such as the clerk's salary and new requirements for data protection which would also have a cost impact. On the issue of data protection it would be necessary to appoint a data protection officer and the chairman appealed for anybody living in the village with relevant experience who might take on the job.

14. Finally the chairman said that there would be elections next year and asked for any volunteers who might be interested in joining the Parish Council.

### **Parish Council Financial Statement 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.**

15. Copies of the financial statement for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 had been circulated. The clerk reported that the Parish Council had again incurred only routine expenditure during the year. The accounts did not fully reflect expenditure on the children's playground as the grant from Borough Councillor Mike Bennett had not yet been spent on the fencing. Other repairs had however been completed. On next year's precept the clerk said that unfortunately costs were increasing and it was very likely therefore that the precept would have to be increased.

16. On the Selmes management expenditure the clerk drew attention to the loans that had been made to the Newenden Trust for the purpose of financing an instalment of the architectural technician's fees for work on the residence that would replace the existing village hall and for the planning application to Ashford Borough Council for that residence.

### **Report of the Newenden Trust**

17. Mr Gould reported that the Newenden Trust had held a Christmas market and raised £600 towards the new village hall. In the Summer there would be an opening of gardens to raise further funds. As the clerk to the Parish Council had explained the Newenden Trust had taken out a loan for some of the architectural technician's and planning application fees for the house to be built on the site of the existing village hall. In due course a further loan would be needed for the architectural technician's fees in relation to the new village hall itself.

18. The planning application for the house on the site of the existing village hall had been delayed at Ashford Borough Council but a decision was expected on 10 April. There appeared to be no obstacles in the way of the application.

19. On the new village hall it would be necessary to comply with requirements laid down by the Charity Commission. A chartered surveyor would have to be appointed to oversee the sale of the existing village hall and a solicitor would also be needed. The Trust had secured the services of a surveyor and a solicitor who would act for no fee.

### **Village Hall matters**

20. The chairman said that the accounts of the village hall had not yet been produced in full but that there remained a balance of £945.00 in the bank account. Full accounts would be put up on the website shortly. The hall would be kept going as long as possible.

**Report of the Community Land Trust Steering Group**

21. Councillor Hannavy-cousen reported that the Community Land Trust (CLT) Steering Group had met recently and decided not to take forward the establishment of a CLT to build affordable homes because the proposal had been particularly divisive in the village. Any proposals for housing would be left to landowners.

**Report of the Samuel Bishop Foundation**

22. The Samuel Bishop Foundation had held a cream tea event and raised £600.00 to supplement their investment income. A further event was being considered this year. The Trust had made £65.00 grants to older and £45.00 to younger children. In total grants to a value of £1,110.00 had been given.

**Report of the Friends of St Peter's**

23. Mr Seal said that the Friends of St Peter's had held a Rye walk and talk on 10 June. The annual trip on the Danny Lee was planned for early July and the usual Duck race would take place as usual later in the year.

**Report of the Newenden Cricket Club**

24. Mrs Holland reported that the cricket club was very healthy at present with a number of young new members. It would be holding a funday on 28 August.

**Any other Business**

25. The chairman announced that the Kent and East Sussex Railway were giving away free tickets for excursions on 22 April.

26. A day of action was planned in the parish on 14 April.

Chairman.....

Date.....