

Minutes of a Meeting of Newenden Parish Council on 14 November in the village hall at 7.30 pm

Present:

Mr A Nilson (chairman)  
Mrs R Edmonds  
Mrs C Baker  
Mr D Richardson  
Mrs Hannavy-cousen

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

There was one member of the public present.

### **Apologies for Absence**

1. None.

### **Declarations of Interest**

2. None.

### **Minutes of the meeting on 12 September**

3. The chairman said that a member of the public who had attended the last meeting, had suggested a number of amendments to the minutes. If the minutes could be improved by accepting any amendments from members of the public present then they should be agreed and in this case most of the suggested amendments had been made to the minutes. The minutes as amended were agreed as a correct record.

### **Matters arising from the Minutes of the meeting on 12 September**

#### Dog Fouling

4. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen said that she was still waiting to hear from Mr Leek the Ashford Borough Council dog warden, about additional dog waste bins for the burial ground behind Battery Bank. She would contact him to find out the position.

5. Councillor Edmonds commented that the position along the river bank had worsened with dog walkers failing to clean up after their dogs. This seemed particularly to be the case with those from outside the village who came to walk their dogs. A member of the public added that dog owners were also allowing their dogs inside the children's playground despite notices at the entrance prohibiting dogs. Councillor Edmonds said that besides being anti-social dog faeces was a health hazard to children as it could contain diseases leading to blindness.

6. It was thought that more signs telling people to clean up after their dogs were needed. Councillors agreed to look on the internet and see if suitable signs were available and their cost. The chairman said that he had a laminating machine and it was not costly to produce laminated

signs. Councillor Edmonds agreed to design the signs. A more prominent sign would be put up at the entrance to the children's playground prohibiting dogs from entering it.

#### Repairs to Play Equipment in the Children's Playground

7. The chairman said that he had been unable to obtain estimates for the repair of some of the play equipment in the children's playground and there seemed to be little alternative other than to do the work using volunteers. It should be possible to lift out and replace the posts on the climbing frame that had deteriorated using a mini-digger, but unfortunately Mr Seal who had a mini-digger was unwell at the moment and unable to operate it. Councillor Richardson said that he was able to drive a mini-digger and suggested that it should be possible to obtain one locally.

#### **Financial Statement to 14 November**

8. A financial statement to 14 November had been circulated. The clerk reported that expenditure had been very restrained during the year up to the present and now only routine costs remained in the current financial year. The current account consequently had a large balance, but it was not worthwhile transferring this to the business reserve account because so little interest was paid. The financial statement was approved.

#### Invoices for payment

9. The following invoices were approved for payment from the management account:

Mr S Crowley	Gate repairs	£11.64
Mr J Jones	Felling oak tree	£370.00

#### **Preliminary consideration of Precept for 2018-19**

10. The chairman said that Ashford Borough Council would not provide calculations on the Council Tax at Band D, the Support Grant and the Concurrent Functions Grant until early December and until then it was not possible to give any detailed consideration to the level of the precept for 2018-19.

11. However, he wondered if consideration could be given to taking forward the proposal that had previously been outlined for a village caretaker. This would entail paying a self employed person to undertake maintenance work around the village for one day a week. The caretaker would do mowing work currently done by Ashford Borough Council and Stephen Siggery like cutting the grass in the children's playground, the closed churchyard and outside Copt Hall. Ashford Borough Council had offered some funding for the parish to take on the mowing they currently did, but as the County Council claimed not to be doing any work like this in the parish they had offered nothing. There was overall a shortfall of about £1,200 in the required funding. This could either be met by increasing the precept or initially for a trial period whilst the caretaker scheme was evaluated, using some of the Council's reserves. A rough calculation showed that the precept would have to increase by around 25% to fund the scheme which might be unacceptable to residents. The chairman said that he would work on the funding figures for the caretaker scheme to calculate what was needed.

#### **Update on New Village Hall**

12. Councillor Richardson reported that the new village hall committee had accepted the plans for the residential house to be built on the site of the existing village hall. The architectural technician

had also produced three alternative designs for the new village hall and would present these in a closed presentation to the Newenden Trust before 24 November. The Newenden Trust would be writing to the Charity Commission to seek agreement for the sale of the existing village hall and the building of the new one. As this would involve a change in the basis of the tenure of the hall from freehold at the moment to leasehold (the new hall would be built on land owned by the Selmes Trust and leased to the Newenden Trust) the Charity Commission might object to the arrangement. The lease would however be for a period of 999 years a length of time that could be argued was virtually the equivalent of a freehold tenure.

13. On 16 December the Trust was holding a Christmas fair. At present it was planned to have ten stalls, a raffle and some children's games. It was planned to have a banner to advertise the event.

### **Felling of Oak Tree**

14. The oak tree on the boundary of the children's playground which had had a bough broken off had been felled and the branches and trunk piled up for future use. The chairman said that it was estimated that it would cost £350.00 to saw the wood into planks. The wood would have to dry out first but could be used for panelling in the new village hall or to make benches. Another possibility was to use smaller pieces of wood to make tepees over drain covers in the Selmes field. Wood that could not be used to make things might be sold for firewood. One potential customer was Ivan at the White Hart.

### **Highways: Report on Kent Highways Seminar on 1 November**

15. Councillor Edmonds reported on the Kent Highways seminar on 1 November. The main theme had unfortunately been about reductions in expenditure. Highways were bearing the brunt of local Government cuts in favour of other areas like adult social care. There would be cuts in subsidies paid to bus companies that would result in a reduction in services. There would also be a large reduction in the amount of highways maintenance work. In particular highways were saying that responsibility for drainage and flooding was the responsibility of landowners.

### **Planning**

16. Councillor Richardson said that there were no planning matters.

### **Any other Business**

#### Day of Action

17. The chairman confirmed that there had recently been a successful day of action.

#### Recruitment of Volunteers to Serve on Committees and the Parish Council

18. The chairman said that thought needed to be given to the recruitment of volunteers to serve on the various committees and the Parish Council.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

19. The next meeting will be on 12 December.

Chairman.....

Date.....