

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Newenden Parish Council on 9 May in the village hall at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors

Mr A Nilson (chairman)
Mrs R Edmonds
Mr D Richardson
Mrs E Hannavy-Cousen

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs C Baker.

Declarations of Interest

2. The chairman explained that he had recently agreed to take up consultancy work for Bourne's the largest employer in the parish and would in future have to declare an interest in any matter that involved the company. There were no declarations of interest relating to the meeting.

Election of Chairman

3. It was unanimously thought that Councillor Nilson should remain as chairman for a further year. There being no other nominations Councillor Nilson was elected as chairman.

Election of Vice Chairman.

4. The chairman proposed that Councillor Edmonds be elected as vice chairman. Councillor Richardson seconded this nomination. There being no other nominations Councillor Edmonds was elected as vice chairman.

Allocation of Business Responsibilities between Councillors

5. It was agreed to maintain the present division of responsibilities between councillors.

Minutes of the Meeting on 21 February

6. The minutes of the meeting on 21 February having been circulated were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising from the Meeting of 21 February

Air Ambulance

7. The chairman recalled that at the Annual Parish meeting residents had agreed that the Council should make an appropriate donation to the air ambulance. It was agreed that the Council would make a donation of £50.00.

Twinning

8. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen said that she had visited Beilstein an der Mosel in Germany and circulated some postcards of the village. The village was very picturesque and had much in parallel with Newenden. The village seemed very suitable for a twinning arrangement with Newenden. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen said that she would contact Ashford Borough Council to see how they might proceed. The chairman said that residents from Beilstein might be invited to visit Newenden and his wife would contact her relatives in the village to see what might be arranged.

Bus shelter

9. The clerk said that Ashford Borough Councillor had circulated an e mail about the annual round of bus shelter grants. The chairman said he had tried to contact Mr Crowley about bus shelters but had been unable to do so. He said that he would keep trying.

Financial Statement to 9 May

10. The financial statement to 9 May was approved. The clerk said that Ashford Borough Council had paid the first instalment of the precept.

Finance

11. The following accounts were approved for payment:

Mr J A Leeves	Arrears of pay April	£2.03
Mr B Livesey	Subscription to CLT	£49.00
Kent Association of Local Councils	Annual subscription	£147.86
Mr J A Leeves	Clerk's allowance & postage	£31.50
Mr C Burns	Internal audit	£72.60
Selmes Management		
Romney Marshes Internal Drainage Board	Drainage rate	£7.48

Annual Return for 2016-17

12. The clerk reported that the internal auditor had completed his work and there were no queries.

Governance Statement

13. Councillors considered the statements in the Governance Statement and agreed that they had met all of these apart from that relating to the provision of public rights to view the accounting records. The clerk explained that they had not complied with the requirement for public inspection

rights by one day and therefore the external auditors had directed that the council must answer “no” to the question. The auditors had not regarded this as a serious omission.

Accounting Statements

14. Councillors approved the accounting statement for 2016-17.

Up date on New Village Hall

15. Councillor Richardson reported on progress by the Newenden Trust on proposals for the new village hall. Councillor Richardson set out a specification for the village hall which would have the same internal dimensions as the existing hall without the stage area. There would be space for about 40 people. It had been decided to sell the existing hall in its present state as the village did not have the finances for the alternative of building a residential dwelling on the existing site and then selling it. There were also risks associated with taking this course. He confirmed that a local estate agent had valued the site at around £200,000.

16. It would be necessary for the Trust to pay for the drawing up of plans and the submission of a planning application to Ashford Borough Council although the parish council would attract a discount of the planning fee. It was suggested that the Selmes Trust might lend the money to pay for this; and the chairman suggested that the money might be lent from the revenues held in the Selmes Management account.

17. As to the arrangements for drawing up the plans for the village hall and a residential dwelling on the site of the existing hall Councillor Richardson said that it would be necessary to employ somebody with architectural experience. He had the names of two people who might undertake the work and would approach them to get quotations.

18. On the actual sale process Councillor Richardson said that it would be necessary to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission for the sale of charity assets to hold a blind auction through a firm of solicitors. There would need to be some preliminary marketing and this would need to be done through a chartered surveyor. The chartered surveyor would be required to recommend a sales process and provided this recommended process was adhered to, there would be no difficulties with the Charity Commission

Update on Community Land Trust

19. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen reported that Mr Tapley had joined the Newenden Trust. The Trust had created a new housing needs survey pertinent to our needs and a pro forma would be reviewed by Tessa O’Sullivan of Action in Communities in Rural Kent. The Newenden CLT was registered with the national body for CLT’s.

Highways

20. Councillor Edmonds reported that there were no highway issues. However, the chairman said that there had been a further accident at the A28/A268 junction in which nobody had been hurt. Councillor Edmonds said she would note this in her record of accidents at the junction.

Planning

21. Several complaints had been received about the non-compliance with planning requirements for Hart House. The chairman said that these complaints should be directed to the Planning Department of Ashford Borough Council. It was not known who had purchased Battery Bank. There were no other planning matters.

Any Other Business

Dog Fouling

22. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen reported that there was a severe problem of dog fouling on the footpath up to the new cemetery behind Battery Bank. Councillor Edmonds commented that there was also a similar problem with dog fouling along the river bank. The chairman said that Councillor Hannavy-Cousen should contact the dog warden at Ashford Borough Council, Mr Colin Leek, who would come out and advise.

Community Speed Watch

23. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen reported that there had been a change of organiser for the Community Speed Watch. The Community Speed Watch Scheme had also become more bureaucratic with the police introducing new requirements. Scheme members were also concerned that the police had not undertaken the speed monitoring sessions that they had promised. The chairman said that he was meeting the PCSO in the near future who had said that he would undertake some speed monitoring sessions in the village.

Date of Next Meeting

24. The next meeting would be on 4 July.

Chairman.....

Date.....