

Minutes of a Meeting of Newenden Parish Council on 12 December at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Councillors

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

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Apologies for Absence

1. Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs C Baker and Mr D Richardson.

Declarations of Interest.

2. None in respect of the meeting. However, the clerk advised that Ashford Borough Council had sent out Disclosable Pecuniary Interest Forms again with the request that Councillors complete and return them. The clerk distributed copies to each Councillor and asked that the forms be returned to the chairman by the end of January 2018.

Minutes of the Meeting on 14 November

3. The minutes of the meeting on 14 November having been circulated were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meeting on 14 November

Dog Fouling Notices

4. Councillor Edmonds reported that the problem of dog fouling was continuing particularly along the river bank. She had started to design notices about dog fouling asking owners to pick up after their dogs but it was difficult to draw a balance between being welcoming to the village and asking dog owners to clean up after their dog.

5. It was agreed that enforcement was the biggest problem despite there being a substantial fine for not cleaning up after a dog. Councillor Hannavy-Cousen suggested that as a deterrent the Council might erect a fake camera and notices saying that CCTV recordings were being made. It was thought that this might not be effective because dog owners would soon realise that the camera was a fake. She had not heard anything further from Mr Leek, the Ashford Borough Council dog warden, and agreed to contact him again and ask if he would visit the Parish when most dog owners walked their dogs in the morning.

Felling oak tree

6. Mr Vann had planked the felled oak tree and the planks were now stored in Mr Gould's barn. It was thought that some of them might be used on the inside walls of the new village hall.

Financial Statement for 12 December

7. The financial statement had been circulated and the clerk commented that only routine expenditure remained to the end of the financial year. The statement was agreed.

Invoices for payment

8. The following invoices were approved for payment from the Management account:

Ashford Borough Council	Planning Application house on site of existing village hall	£192.50
Mr J Vann	Planking oak tree	£350.00

The clerk commented that he had not yet received the planning papers relating to the application for a residential house on the site of the existing village hall. There might be an issue as to whether the Parish Council could comment on its own application. This would need to be resolved in due course.

Precept for 2018-19

9. The chairman said that the Council had not spent very much in the current year and the balance in hand at the end of the year was anticipated to be a little over £6,000. There did not seem to be any reason why the precept for 2018-19 should be increased and he therefore proposed a standstill. The Council Tax Support Grant had increased marginally to £110.00. The Parish would claim the full Concurrent Functions Grant of £280.00. Factoring in these grants would result in a requirement for a precept on the Parish of £4,975.00 and a total payment of £5,365.00. It was agreed to keep the precept at the same level for 2018-19.

Village Caretaker Scheme

10. The chairman said that he was keen to implement a village caretaker scheme. This would entail taking over the mowing and maintenance work currently undertaken by Ashford Borough Council and Mr Siggery. It was anticipated that the village caretaker would work for about one day a week. Ashford had offered to contribute the cost of the work they currently carried out and the Parish Council would add what was spent on the work done by Mr Siggery. There would however, be an annual shortfall in funding of about £1,200. As reserves had increased to slightly over one year's precept the Parish could afford to cover this shortfall for a year.

11. The chairman said that he would check with Ashford whether they were still prepared to offer funding for the Parish to take over the work that they were currently doing. If so then he proposed to hold a tender during January to select a contractor. The clerk reminded Councillors that if they held a tender then there were certain requirements which they should ensure were met particularly the need for the contractor to have public liability insurance.

New Village Hall

12. Councillor Hannavy-cousen reported that plans for the new village hall were now on the website and an application for planning permission for the residential house to be built on the site of the existing village hall had been submitted to Ashford Borough Council. The plans for the residential house had attracted some adverse comment from residents living on either side but no other views.

13. It was planned to hold various fund raising events to help finance the new village hall. On Saturday 16 December there would be a Christmas fair for which there were 12 stalls and a raffle would be held. On 22 January there would be a Burns night for which they were selling tickets and in May a garden would open to raise funds.

Highways

14. Councillor Edmonds reported that Highways had repaired the accident damaged barrier by Newenden bridge. Drains on Newenden hill remained a problem as they were broken and cleaning out silt would only be a temporary solution until they were repaired.

Planning

15. There were no planning issues.

Any Other Business

Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan

16. The chairman said that he had received a copy of the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan. He explained that a Neighbourhood Plan was costly and time consuming to prepare and had the advantage of conferring some rights on planning matters. Councillors wishing to look at the Plan could do so on the Rolvenden website.

Proposals for Work in the Village from Mr Crowley

17. Mr Crowley had made a number of suggestions for various small projects around the village. He had suggested that drain covers be made for the drains in the Selmes field and that hedges be replanted where they had been knocked down by people pushing boats through and around the children's playground. The climbing frame in the playground also needed repair and he had suggested a way of mending it. Of these it was thought that priority should be given to the hedge replanting where boats had been pushed through and repairs to the climbing frame.

Date of Next Meeting

18. It was agreed that the next meeting would be on 27 February 2018. The clerk said that he would circulate proposed dates for meetings during the remainder of 2018. The Annual Parish Meeting would be held on 20 March 2018.

Chairman.....

Date.....

