

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Newenden Parish Council held on 15 May 2012 at 7.30 pm in the village hall

Present:

Councillors

Mr A Nilson (chairman)
Mrs R Edmonds
Mr B Livesey
Mrs J Eldridge
Mr D Richardson

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Members of the public

Alex the new proprietor of the Bodiam Ferry attended the meeting to explain how he and his wife were becoming involved with the community and the plans that he had.

Apologies for absence

1. None.

Declarations of interest

2. None.

Election of chairman

3. Councillor Edmonds proposed that Councillor Nilson be re-elected as chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Livesey. Councillor Nilson was unanimously re-elected as chairman.

Election of vice chairman

4. The chairman proposed that Councillor Edmonds be re-elected as vice chairman. This was seconded by Councillor Livesey. Councillor Edmonds was unanimously elected as vice chairman.

Allocation of business responsibilities between Councillors

5. Councillors agreed to retain the business areas for which they were currently responsible.

Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February

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

Matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 21 February

7. The clerk circulated a letter he had received from Kent County Councillor Mr M Hill explaining that preparatory work was proceeding to install the flashing road sign on the A268 at the approach to Newenden. The clerk also mentioned that he had written to Mr Crowley of the Rother Fishery Association but had not yet received any reply. Other matters arising were dealt with later in the meeting.

Financial statement to 15 May

8. The financial statement to 15 May was circulated. The clerk commented that the first half of the precept and concurrent functions grant had been received. The financial statement was approved.

Other financial matters

9. The following accounts were approved for payment

Mr J Leeves	Clerk's allowance and postage	£17.06
Mr D Richardson	Printing questionnaires Parish Plan	£30.00

10. The clerk reported that he had completed the annual return in draft and had prepared the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012. These now had to be audited by the internal auditor. He had written to the internal auditor asking for this to be done by 31 May. It would then be necessary to hold a short Council meeting to approve the annual return.

11. The clerk commented that there would be no need to include in the annual return any figures relating to transactions under the management agreement with the Selmes Trust. He had prepared a very simple account of these which he would ask the internal auditor to check. The chairman mentioned that a payment for mooring fees had erroneously gone direct to the Selmes Trust and there would need to be an offset of the rent paid by the Parish Council to the Trust for the children's playground. The accounts would need to be adjusted accordingly.

12. The clerk had previously circulated the unaudited accounts for the Selmes Trust management agreement to Councillors which they now approved subject to audit. After audit the clerk would send these to the Selmes Trust by 1 June as required by the management agreement.

Report on Meeting with the Selmes Trust

13. The chairman reported on a recent meeting with the Selmes Trust at which activities under the management agreement had been discussed. The chairman had explained what the Parish Council had done in the previous year and detailed the rents that had been received. The Reverend Desrosiers had indicated that the Parish Council had made more progress than he had been expecting and that the agreement was working well. The trustees were therefore content to renew the management agreement for a further year. Councillors agreed that the Parish Council should renew the management agreement for a further year.

Report on Rural Conference meeting with Ashford Borough Council

14. The chairman reported on a rural conference with Ashford Borough Council that dealt with localism.

Update on progress with Parish Plan

15. Councillor Richardson reported on the results of the questionnaire that had been circulated to villagers. There had been 29 replies. A colleague was in the process of collating all of the comments that had been received. The results of the questionnaire would be presented at a meeting before the next township meeting in June.

Hire of speed indication equipment

16. Councillors agreed that as the flashing sign would be installed sometime in the relatively near future there was no point in hiring speed indication equipment again for the moment.

Reports:

Planning

17. Councillors considered planning application 12/00501/AS Mulberry cottage and did not wish to make any comments on it.

Highways

18. Councillor Edmonds reported that she would be attending a seminar on emergency planning for flooding.

Any other business

Police report

19. Councillor Livesey gave a report from PCSO Oliver Welch on levels of crime. There had been seven crimes in the ward but only one in Newenden theft from a vehicle outside of the kebab van. There was a general problem in the district of theft of heating oil.

Village hall committee

20. The chairman reported that the village hall committee had become dysfunctional because of a lack of volunteers. There was a considerable amount of work involved in being a member of the village hall committee which the clerk explained in detail. The chairman and the clerk also explained the reasons why the Parish Council did not manage the village hall in nearly all villages. Councillor Richardson agreed that the Parish Plan Committee would extend its work to include ways of reviving the village hall management committee.

Diamond Jubilee celebrations

21. The chairman reported that Ashford Borough Councillor Mike Bennett had made a grant of £250 for the Jubilee celebrations. Councillor Richardson showed Councillors a jubilee mug that he had designed and that it was proposed should be given to children living in the village. An order form and programme for the Jubilee celebrations were on the Council's website. Councillors agreed to make a list of children living in the village.

22. Councillor Richardson explained that it was proposed to have a procession of boats led by the Danny Lee that would sail down the river to Wittersham and then return to Newenden where there would be a picnic behind the cricket pavilion.

Registration of land on which village hall located

23. The chairman explained that the land on which the village hall was built was not registered with the Land Registry. He proposed that this should be done and agreed to undertake the necessary administration thereby avoiding the cost of engaging solicitors. There would however, be some Land Registry fees to pay. Councillors agreed that the land should be registered and that the chairman should go ahead and do so. The small triangle of land behind the village hall which nobody owned was mentioned and it was agreed that the chairman would seek the advice of the Land Registry on what to do about this.

Grass cutting

24. The chairman reported that he had been investigating the position on the various areas of grass that was being cut by different people in the Parish. Stephen Siggery who cut the grass in the children’s playground and the boundary hedge charged £48.00 per month making an annual cost of not much less than £500. The PCC were paying £52.00 per month to have the upper graveyard cut again by Stephen Siggery. Contractors to Ashford Borough Council (Kent Landscape Services) cut the closed churchyard, the area outside Copt hall and a small area outside Heron cottages for £581 per annum according to the Borough Council. The same contractors also mowed the cricket pitch and the chairman suspected that because they had the other work in the village and probably elsewhere for the Borough Council their charges were reasonable. The chairman said that he needed to investigate costs further with the Borough Council.

25. The chairman said that there might be a possibility of combining the contracts to mow the children’s playground and the upper churchyard. The PCC were finding it hard to meet the costs of mowing the churchyard and the Parish Council might wish to make a contribution to the cost. The clerk explained that in many Parishes the Council made an annual discretionary grant to the PCC to help with churchyard mowing costs. Councillor Livesey agreed that further investigations into combining the contracts to mow the playground and churchyard should be undertaken but had serious reservations about spending Parish Council funds on something that was the responsibility of the PCC. The chairman said that he needed to explore the position further and would report back to Councillors.

Date of next meeting

26. There would be a short special meeting on 6 June at 7.00 pm to approve the annual return and the internal auditor’s report. The clerk would circulate the assurance page of the annual return beforehand so that it could be approved quickly at the meeting. The next full meeting of the Parish Council will be on 10 July.

Chairman.....

Date.....