

Minutes of a Meeting of Newenden Parish Council on 30 June at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Present:

Councillors

Mr A Nilson (chairman)  
Mrs R Edmonds  
Miss C Bond  
Mrs E Hannvay-Cousen  
Mr D Richardson

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

There were nine members of the public present.

**Apologies for absence**

1. None.

**Declarations of interest**

2. None.

**Minutes of the Meetings on 12 May and 2 and 24 June**

3. The minutes of the meetings on 12 May and 2 and 24 June having been circulated were agreed as a correct record.

**Matters arising from the Minutes of the Meetings on 12 May and 2 and 24 June**

Flood Warden Risk Assessment

4. Mr Livesey, the flood warden, said that he had not yet been in touch with Kent Resilience to obtain risk assessment templates.

Parking in Lossenham lane

5. Signs had been printed and put up asking people not to park in Lossenham lane so as to cause an obstruction.

**Financial statement**

6. The financial statement to 30 June had been circulated. The clerk said that the first half of the precept and concurrent functions grant had been received. There had been little expenditure so far in the year. The financial statement was agreed.

7. The clerk pointed out that the fees from the Rother Fishery Association would soon be received and with these the amount in the Selmes Trust Management account would be around £4,700. The chairman said that no decision on the use of these funds to finance the construction of the proposed river moorings could be taken until a new vicar had been appointed. A meeting with representatives of the Selmes Trust would need to be held in the near future to discuss this and more general matters concerning the Selmes Trust land.

### **Affordable Housing**

8. The chairman welcomed Mr Angus Middleton who had come to talk about his experience with affordable housing. As background he then said that Action with Communities in Rural Kent had recently carried out a local needs housing survey in the village which had only shown a need for three houses.

9. Mr Middleton explained that he was involved in trying to provide a scheme for low cost housing in rural areas. The scheme involved the provision of a wood burning district heating system for the houses for the houses being built. The scheme required a minimum of six houses to be commercially viable and approximately three acres of woodland per house to supply the wood fuel. The woodland need not be immediately adjacent to the houses. As well as providing fuel the woodland would also be available for community use. Once built, the houses would then be sold at a price of about £200,000 each and the scheme would thereby be self-funding.

10. Planning consent could be obtained for the houses even on agricultural land, if it could be shown that the project was self sustainable through the burning of wood that was renewable. Land could be sourced through the community.

### **Community Speed Watch**

11. The chairman proposed that the Parish Council should cease to participate in the community speed watch scheme and outlined his reasons why. He thought that enforcement of speed restrictions should be left to the police force who were the proper authority to deal with it. Members of the community were in effect becoming vigilantes by recording those who were speeding and reporting them to the police. He envisaged that the community would have to undertake more of the functions currently done by the Borough and County Councils because of budgetary constraints, and speed enforcement should not be one of these.

12. The chairman acknowledged that community speed watch had had some deterrent effect with the numbers of speeding drivers declining since it had been in operation. This improvement did not however negate his previous arguments against continuing with it.

13. Mr Livesey, the organiser of community speed watch, said that the scheme had indeed reduced speeding through the village. The scheme particularly targetted those who were driving significantly in excess of the speed limit and in this respect followed police guidelines of 10% plus two mph. The police had only come to Newenden once to enforce the speed limit and given lack of police resources, he did not think that they would do so very frequently in the future.

14. The improvement in speeding through the village needed to be maintained and consequently community speed watch was well supported by residents and the Parish Council had a duty to deal with the problem for the community.

15. Councillors discussed the issue and gave their views. They considered that other measures could be implemented to reduce speeding. These included extending the speed limit by moving restriction signs, having a further flashing sign at the beginning of the 30 mph zone, putting up speed camera signs and installing gates on the approaches to the village with speed restriction signs. Councillor Hannvay-Cousen said that she had had comments which indicated that community speed watch was having a deterrent effect. Mr Livesey said that he would enquire about the possibility of more signs.

16. The Council voted on the issue and decided by 4 votes to one to continue supporting community speed watch.

### **Highways**

17. Councillor Hannvay-Cousen reported that the footpath between Newenden and Sandhurst was overgrown and needed to be cleared so that pedestrians could walk safely. She would approach Highways to see if they would be prepared to clear it.

### **Planning**

18. Councillor Richardson said that the Council had met on the 24 June to discuss applications for the Old Rectory and White cottage. Councillors had decided to support the application for the Old Rectory but opposed that for White cottage because the proposed new house was not in keeping with other properties in Lossenham lane.

### **Any other Business**

#### Selmes Trust Field

19. Councillor Edmonds said that the grass in the Selmes field had grown very long and required cutting and would try and find someone who could do this. The farmer who grazed his sheep in the field was moving away and consequently would not need it in future.

#### Himalayan Balsam

20. Mr Crowley had advised that there was an infestation of Himalayan Balsam in the Selmes field which needed to be removed. The chairman said that this was a job for the next day of action.

### **Date of next meeting**

21. The next meeting would be on the 8 September.

Chairman.....

Date.....