

Minutes of a Meeting of Newenden Parish Council held on 4 June 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

There were six members of the public present including Councillor J Taylor a representative from Northiam Parish Council.

Apologies for absence

1. None.

Declarations of interest

2. None.

Minutes of the meeting on 7 May

3. The minutes of the AGM of the Parish Council on 7 May having been circulated were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes of the Meeting on 7 May

4. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting on 7 May that were not on the agenda.

Financial statement to 4 June

5. The financial statement to 4 June had been circulated. The clerk commented that there had been little expenditure in the current year and that he had received rent from the Rother Fishery Association and some mooring fees. The financial statement was approved.

Accounts for payment

6. The chairman advised that the river warden Mr Seal had had to purchase some mooring poles at a cost of about £77.00 and had reimbursed himself from a cash payment of £80.00 from a boat owner who had paid his mooring fees in cash. A cash balance of about £3.00 remained. Councillors agreed the expenditure. The clerk asked that Mr Seal provide an invoice for the mooring poles when he paid the remaining cash balance.

Path and Information Signage: Presentation from Bodiam Boating Station

7. The chairman asked Vanessa Ferrett from the Bodiam Boating station to give a presentation on their plans for improving signage and paths between the boating station and Newenden and Northiam. She explained that the Bodiam Boating station were improving the facilities of the business to attract more customers and wanted to improve signage and footpaths/paths so that people could reach their facilities on foot and also walk to the neighbouring villages of Newenden and Northiam. There was no pedestrian footway provision across Newenden bridge nor was there any roadside footway on either side of the bridge. In consequence pedestrians had to walk along the side of the road which was very dangerous.

8. Contact had been made with the High Weald organisation that had a sustainable development fund that might be used for helping with the cost of providing footpaths and the signage of them. This would be on a matched funding basis. Applications for the funding of projects under the sustainable funding scheme had to be made by the end of June. A footpath between the Kent and East Sussex railway station at Northiam and Newenden and the Bodiam boating station could have some educational benefits along the way and would encourage pedestrians to walk between the villages. There was a problem with Newenden bridge which was narrow and a separate pedestrian bridge would be prohibitively costly. Pedestrian control of the traffic lights to stop traffic on the bridge while pedestrians crossed was a possibility.

9. Councillors discussed how they might help and explored the possibility of further funding from the County Council and other organisations. The Parish Council agreed that they would like to help but at the present time nobody was available to take the project on full time until work on the Parish Plan had been completed. It was agreed that the chairman would host a meeting of a project committee on 11 June to discuss how it could be taken forward and an application for funding made by the end of June.

Parish Plan (Issues other than housing)

10. Councillor Richardson reported that following the township meeting on 7 May, when a draft of the Parish plan had been discussed, the Parish plan committee had made a number of minor amendments and corrections to the Plan in areas other than those dealing with housing development to reflect the comments that had been made at the meeting. In the light of the preceding presentation from the Bodiam Boating station he would add reference to the need for a footpath past Bourne's and pedestrian control of the traffic lights or a separate pedestrian bridge across the river. Councillors expressed their thanks to Councillor Richardson for his work in writing and coordinating consultation on the plan.

Parish Plan: Housing and Development

11. Councillor Richardson said that the committee had prepared two alternative sections dealing with housing and development in the Parish plan. The first alternative was more detailed and specific in that it mentioned the possibility of different types of housing such as shared ownership, affordable and social housing and also referred to some specific sites that might be developed. The second alternative was less specific and just set out in a general way aims in relation to provision of housing.

12. Councillors thought that they wished to support the second more general expression of wishes for housing and development. Councillor Richardson was asked to make any final drafting changes to this option and then arrange for the whole Plan to be printed and distributed to residents. Councillors agreed that the draft Plan should include colour pictures and that the Parish Council would meet the printing costs. Councillor Richardson would obtain an estimate of the cost from printers. It was agreed that the Plan would be circulated next week and that a township meeting would then be held on 25 June to discuss the draft of the Plan.

Newenden Housing Needs Survey

13. The request from Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) for a housing survey in the village, had been circulated to Councillors and the chairman explained that he had responded indicating that the Parish Council would consider the request for a survey and whether to endorse it at their meeting on 4 June. The chairman had asked ACRK whether they knew the location of the site(s) that the builder behind the request for the survey would be interested in developing but this information was not known. He had also asked Ashford Borough Councillor Mike Bennett about the Borough Council's position on the survey but he had been unable to provide any further information other than to confirm that the Council worked on housing needs with ACRK. In broad terms it appeared that were the survey to establish that there was a need for affordable housing in the village then the Borough Council might give planning consent.

14. Councillors thought that housing issues in the Parish plan should be dealt with before the housing needs survey was circulated. As they had just decided to hold a township meeting to discuss the latest draft of the Parish plan on 25 June it would be preferable for the survey to be circulated after this meeting when residents would be able to comment on the position on housing development in the plan. Councillors also thought that the survey should include some Newenden specific questions and an indication of the location of any housing development. The chairman said he would respond to ACRK along these lines.

Rolvenden Neighbourhood Planning Area Application

15. The clerk had circulated the e-mail about the Rolvenden neighbourhood planning area application before the meeting. Councillors said that they had looked at the application and did not see anything in it on which they wished to comment. The clerk said that he would send a no comment response.

Community Speed Watch

16. Councillor Livesey said that he had been in contact with some other adjacent local parishes who were keen to undertake the community speed watch scheme. Two of these parishes had apparently already purchased the necessary equipment. He would be holding a meeting with all of the parishes involved to establish some more details and the cost of participating.

Any other business

Selmes Trust Management Agreement meeting

17. This had not yet been arranged and the chairman said that he would remind the vicar.

Tenterden Forum meeting

18. The next Tenterden Forum meeting was on 10 July, but unfortunately Councillor Eldridge would be unable to attend. Councillor Richardson offered to attend the Forum.

Water resources consultation

19. It was not felt that this impacted upon the village and that a response was unnecessary

Children's playground equipment

20. Councillor Livesey said that he had received a report that some of the equipment in the children's playground had been vandalised. On investigating he found that part of the climbing frame had become rotten and that it was unsafe to use. One of the spring horses was also slightly broken. He had roped off the climbing frame and put a notice up saying it was unsafe to use. Councillor Livesey said he would ask a local builder to look at what repairs were necessary and provide an estimate of the cost.

Gullies at the far end of Lossenham Lane

21. Councillors commented that the gullies at the far end of Lossenham Lane had not been cleaned out. Councillor Edmonds said that she would report the matter to highways and ask them to undertake cleaning.

Date of next meeting

22. The next Parish Council meeting will be on 20 August.

Chairman.....

Date.....