

Minutes of the Meeting of Newenden Parish Council held on 5 May in the village hall at 7.30 pm

Present

Councillors

Mr M Berry (chairman)
Mrs R Edmonds
Mr A Nilson
Mr C Turnbull
Mrs J Eldridge

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Members of the Public

None.

Apologies for Absence

09.032 None.

Declarations of interest

09.033 None.

Election of chairman

09.034 Councillor Turnbull proposed that Councillor Berry should be chairman for a further year. Seconded by Councillor Nilson. Councillor Berry signed his declaration of office.

Election of Vice chairman

09.035 Councillor Nilson proposed that Councillor Edmonds continued as vice chairman for a further year. Seconded by Councillor Berry.

Allocation of Responsibilities between Councillors

09.036 Councillors agreed that the allocation of responsibilities should remain unchanged for the coming year.

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February

09.037 It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting on 17 February having been circulated be signed as a correct record. Councillor Nilson agreed to place a copy of the minutes on the website.

Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 17 February

09.038 Councillor Eldridge commented that the Country Kids sign was still being continuously displayed at the base of the village sign when the nursery supervisor had been requested on to display it when the nursery was open during the day. Councillor Berry said he would speak to her again.

Reports

09.039 Planning

Result of Appeal to Planning Inspectorate Ref: APP/E2205/A/08/2091606

Old Cart Lodge, Lossenham Lane, Newenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN18 5QQ

The appeal had been allowed. Councillor Eldridge commented that the subject of the appeal, a conservatory at the rear of the property, had already been erected.

09.040 Highways

Councillor Edmonds reported that much of the work that had been discussed with representatives from Kent Highway Services at a site visit in February had now been completed. This included repainting of the white lines on the A268 and at the Lossenham Lane junction. Drains on Newenden Hill had been cleared and the footpath/pavement on the hill cleared so that it was much wider. The latter was a particular improvement.

The clerk reported that he had contacted the bus operating company, Coastal coaches, about the bus stop at the beginning of the Tenterden road the A28. Coastal coaches did not own the bus stop and thought that a long time ago ownership of bus stops had been transferred to either the County or Borough Councils and in some cases Parish Councils.

The bus stop in question was unused and the company had no objection to its removal. There would however, be a problem in relocating it to a position outside of Unity cottages at the top of Newenden Hill. This was because traffic would have to overtake a stationary bus and would be on the opposite side of the road. There might be a collision with traffic coming the other way as it rounded the corner where there were also double white lines. For this reason the bus company would oppose such a relocation. Councillors understood the logic of this and as the bus stop was unused asked the clerk to pursue its removal.

Clerk's Report

09.041 Kent County Council

The County Council had asked to notify the Council of footpath matters by electronic means. The clerk commented that although there were footpaths in the Parish the County Council had never contacted him about them. The clerk confirmed that he would have no objection to receiving footpath information electronic and Councillors agreed.

09.042 Ashford Borough Council

Nothing of significance had been received that had not been previously circulated electronically or had not now been put in the diplomatic bag for circulation.

09.043 Selmes Trust

The chairman of the Selmes Trust, the Reverend Desrosiers, had responded to the clerk's letter commenting on proposals to circulate a letter to Newenden residents about use of the village playing field for riding of quad bikes and motorised toys and the noise this activity generated. A few days after receipt of the letter the chairman had attended the Annual Parish meeting and spoken about the provisions of the letter in relation to the playing field and the withdrawal of permission for residents to moor boats at moorings owned by the Selmes Trust on the river Rother.

Councillors were concerned that the Selmes Trust had rejected their suggestion that use of the playing field for the riding of quad bikes and motorised toys be restricted to the hours of 10 am to 2 pm because this would reduce use of the playing field to school holidays and when the cricket team were not using it. The chairman commented that contrary to the proposed conditions children over the age of twelve years had very recently been seen riding on motorcycles on the playing field. Councillors felt that this showed the conditions would be difficult to enforce.

It was felt that the idea of restricting the engine size of bikes and toys that could be ridden that had been suggested at the Annual Parish meeting was helpful. The chairman had appeared to be agreeable to this suggestion at the meeting and Councillors wondered whether it would be implemented.

The chairman commented that there were still a number of boats on the Selmes Trust moorings on the river Rother despite the Trust having requested their removal. Councillors felt that the chairman of the Trust should be asked for an update on the situation.

Finance

09.044 Financial Statement for 5 May

It was resolved that the financial statement to 5 May be approved and a copy is attached to these minutes. The clerk commented that he had not received any notification from Ashford Borough Council that they had paid the first half precept. He had been unable to verify payment because the bank statement for April had not yet been received. It was normal for the first half of the precept to be paid by the end of April and this had been assumed in the monthly statement.

09.045 Accounts for payment.

The following accounts were approved for payment:

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|---------------------------------|---|---------|
| Mr J A Leeves | Clerk's allowance and postage costs | £17.82 |
| Mr J A Leeves | Petty cash litter picker's wages | £50.00 |
| Kent Association Local Councils | Annual subscription | £116.21 |
| Bourne Amenity | Base of village sign construction | £402.50 |
| Mr J A Leeves | Arrears of pay | £3.60 |
| Mr J A Leeves | Copying documents Annual Parish Meeting | £36.39 |
| Mr J A Leeves | No dogs sign children's playground | £5.48 |
| Selmes Trust | Arrears of rent children's playground | £250.00 |

The clerk commented that the Treasurer of the Selmes Trust had not sent him any receipt for payment of the arrears of rent for the children's playground. The absence of a receipt was in fact part of a wider problem concerning the children's playground.

The clerk did not hold a tenancy agreement relating to the playground. In consequence it was not known when the annual rent for it was due again. More importantly, any terms and conditions relating to the tenancy were unknown. The clerk had therefore sent an e-mail to the chairman of the Selmes Trust (the Treasurer advised he did not hold a copy of the tenancy agreement) asking if he might have a copy of the agreement.

The clerk explained that the rent was £50.00 per year and the Council had paid for five years ie £250.00. Councillors were uncertain how long Mr Wheeler had paid the rent and felt five years was a very long time. The chairman said he thought Mr Hussell had previously been involved with the Selmes Trust finances and agreed to ask him about the position. Councillors said that they felt sure that the Parish Council had contributed towards the cost of drawing up the tenancy agreement and that the Council ought to hold a copy. Clerk to pursue obtaining a copy of the agreement.

09.046 Other financial matters

The clerk reported that the internal auditor would be coming on 9 May to audit the Council's financial affairs for the year ended 31 March 2009. The auditor would only take a few days to produce his report which could be circulated by e-mail. However, it would then be necessary to hold a very short meeting to agree the annual return to the Audit Commission. This had to be done quickly as the date for completing the return was 31 May.

09.047 Contract of Employment for Litter Collector

Now that a new litter collector had been appointed the clerk reminded Councillors that it would be necessary to issue him with a letter of appointment. The litter collector was Mr T McKinley and he lived at Manor House East. Councillors and the clerk had already seen Mr McKinley at work and felt he was doing a good job.

09.048 Bank Mandate for Operating Council Bank Accounts

Councillor Nilson reported that he had visited the bank in Tenterden and obtained a new bank mandate form. Unfortunately it was necessary for all Councillors to enter their details on the form and provide specimens of their signature and not just the new signatory. Councillors completed the form.

Matters Arising from the Annual Parish Meeting on 26 March

09.049 A member of the public attending the Annual Parish meeting on 26 March had drawn attention to the fact that the Perspex in the Parish Council noticeboard at the entrance to the village hall had still not been replaced because it was almost opaque. The chairman said he would arrange for a clear glass replacement.

Any other business

09.050 None.

Dates of next meetings

09.051 The next meetings of the Parish Council would be on 14 July and 6 October in the village hall.

Chairman.....

Date.....