

Minutes of a Meeting of Newenden Parish Council held on Zoom on 7 January at 7.00 pm

Present:

Mr D Wright (chairman)
Mrs J Eldridge
Mrs H Masters

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Members of the Public

There were five members of the public present.

Apologies for absence

1. Apologies were received from Mr D Rose.

Declarations of interest

2. None.

Minutes of the Meeting on 8 September

3. The clerk had circulated the minutes of the meeting on 8 September. Councillor Eldridge said that the depth of the scrape in the Selmes field was incorrect and should be 45 centimetres not 4 to 5. The amendment was agreed. Subject to this amendment, the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

Matters arising from the minutes of the Meeting on 8 September

4. None.

Invoices for Payment

5. The following invoices were approved for payment:

PC Account

Mr J Leeves	Clerk's allowance & postage	£30.08
Mr J Leeves	Arrears of salary	£17.55
Mr J Turnbull	Hinges repairs children's playground	£45.47
Mr D MacCrae	Work children's playground	£26.50
Mr S Fall	Website hosting	£6.00
St Mary Virgin Rolvenden	Newsletter printing	£5.00
Mr S Pemberton Hedge	cutting children's playground	£120.00

Management Account:

Mr D McCrae Excavating Scrape

£652.00

Precept for 2021-22

6. The chairman explained that Ashford Borough Council had proposed removing the Council Tax and Concurrent Functions grants from Parish Councils and were due to take the decision imminently. In Newenden's case the removal of these grants would lead to a shortfall in income of about £350.00 per year. Local Government finances were extremely precarious at the moment as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and looking forward the Parish could expect the Borough Council to reduce their costs and in consequence services wherever possible.

7. Historically, Newenden had only increased the precept by marginal amounts or held it at the same level as the previous year. The Parish Council had sufficient reserves this year to maintain the precept at the current level which would help residents during the current pandemic which was putting pressure on finances. However, it was almost inevitable that the precept would have to increase the following year. Councillors unanimously agreed that the precept paid by residents should remain at the same level as 2020-21.

Any other Business

Trees

8. Mr Seal said that he was very concerned about the state of two Lyme trees and an Oak tree on the Selmes field. He was also concerned about a smaller Oak tree very close to the A268 almost in the Selmes field roadside boundary hedge. This latter tree had shed branches in the road which residents had cleared up. The other trees also appeared to be in poor shape. The clerk reminded Councillors that the Lyme trees at least where covered under a Tree Preservation Order.

9. The chairman said that he thought the Lyme trees were the responsibility of the cricket club, but he would report concern about their condition to the Selmes Trust. He would also contact Kent Highways as the tree close to the road might be their responsibility. An inspection of the other Oak tree was necessary and he would also contact the Selmes Trust about this.

Vacancy on the Parish Council

10. Mrs Bourne asked if there was a vacancy on the Parish Council. The chairman confirmed that Mr Turnbull had resigned and that the Council was in touch with Ashford about posting a notice of the vacancy.

Date of next meeting

11. To be arranged.

Chairman.....

Date.....

