

BROOMFIELD AND KINGSWOOD PARISH COUNCIL

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Minutes of a meeting of the Parish Council held at Kingswood and Broomfield Village Hall, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood on Monday 6th February 2012

PRESENT:

Cllr Paul Beaney
Cllr Mike Evans
Cllr Justin West

Cllr Peter Coleman
Cllr Peter Forster

Cllr Vince Cooper
Cllr Mike O'Neill

(7)

Mrs S Wotton - Clerk
Mrs G Gosden – Assistant Clerk & Finance Officer

There were 4 members of the public present; no questions were asked.

The Clerk opened the meeting and informed Members that Cllr Cooper had, on 4th February, notified his resignation as Chairman with immediate effect. (Maidstone Borough Council had been informed accordingly and the Parish website updated). No Member offered to Chair the meeting and due to there also being no Vice Chairman in place, the Clerk suggested bringing Agenda item 2 'Election of Vice Chairman' forward, which was agreed by all.

288. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Cllr Evans proposed Cllr Coleman as Vice Chairman, seconded by Cllr Forster. Cllr Coleman accepted the proposal. The vote was carried by 3 votes for, 2 votes against and 1 abstention. Cllr Evans offered thanks to Cllr Coleman for volunteering to become Vice Chairman and also extended thanks on behalf of fellow Members to Cllr Cooper for the work he had undertaken during his time as Chairman. The Clerk also wished to thank Cllr Cooper for being instrumental in setting up the Staffing Committee and conducting Staff Appraisals for the first time.

Cllr Coleman then formally declared the meeting open at 19.35.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Jenny Whittle, KCC Maidstone Rural East	Family commitment
Cllr Peter Parvin, Leeds Ward, Maidstone Borough Council	Illness
Cllr Terry Baker	Family commitment

289. COUNCILLORS DECLARATIONS (Regarding Agenda Items)

- 289.1 Lobbying
- 289.2 Personal Interest
- 289.3 Prejudicial Interest (Councillor to leave meeting table whilst such item is under discussion)

None declared.

290. MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING HELD 9TH JANUARY 2012

Min 268 - Cllr Cooper disagreed that there had been an 'agreement', and recalled that there had been a 'consensus' when discussing this item. He thus asked that the minutes be amended by deleting 'agreed' and replacing with 'consensus'.

Min 268 – the Clerk had pointed out at the commencement of this Agenda item that the heading 'In-house training for new Members' did not accurately reflect the item, the purpose of the suggested crib sheet being to assist new Councillors with basic information, abbreviations, etc., and was not intended for training purposes us such. The Clerk asked for the minutes to be amended accordingly.

Signed _____ Chairman

Cllr West then proposed these amendments and the minutes be accepted as a true record, seconded by Cllr Beaney, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman. **ACTION- Clerk**

291. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES MEETING HELD 4TH JANUARY 2012

Cllr Evans proposed these minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr O'Neill, agreed by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

292. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 9TH JANUARY 2012

Cllr West proposed these minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Cooper, agreed by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

293. MINUTES OF THE STAFFING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 25TH JANUARY 2012

The Clerk asked when the consultation with the Clerks pertaining to staffing issues would take place as no-one had yet consulted with her. Cllr Cooper advised that this would take place at an agreed time in the future, the meeting and minutes include principles re: intended future action.

Cllr Forster then proposed these minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr Cooper, agreed by all as a true record and signed by the Chairman

294. MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD 30TH JANUARY 2012

Cllr West proposed these minutes as a true record, seconded by Cllr O'Neill, agreed by all and signed by the Chairman

295. ACTIONS & OUTCOMES

A/Clerk circulated updated report which was received, agreed and retained on file. Cllr Forster requested the A/Clerk forward to him a copy of the previously agreed CDM letter and to send one to all newly approved planning applications in the Parish. **ACTION – A/Clerk & Cllr Forster**

296. KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Cllr Jenny Whittle had offered her apologies for non-attendance. In her absence she had provided a report with updates on various issues including S-f Broadband. Clerk had previously circulated copy of same to all Members for their information, retained on file.

297. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Cllr Parvin had given his apologies for non-attendance due to a late hospital appointment. Clerk reported that Cllr Parvin has continued his active support in regard to the Parish affordable housing issues and would attend the forthcoming meeting with MBC's Housing Options Team. He had also liaised with Cabinet Member, Cllr John Wilson, and reported that Cllr Wilson would also be attending this meeting.

298. POLICING

298.1 *Crime figures and Police report - PCSO Kirby.* B&K - no reported crime; Langley – no reported crime; Sutton Valence – 1 x Attempt Burglary Other Than Dwelling, 2 x Theft Of Motor Vehicle, 4 x Theft; Ulcombe – 1 x Criminal damage; East Sutton – 1 x Theft 1; Leeds – 1 x Burglary and 1 x Burglary Other Than Dwelling. It was noted that this the second consecutive month of no reported crime in the Parish.

PCSO Kirby reported that Neighbourhood Policing Sgt Martin Ford had retired and that A/Sgt Greaves would be replacing him in the meantime.

Cllr West thanked the member of the public, a Parish resident (occupant of Peter Pease Close), who was present at the meeting for clearing the roads during recent snow fall.

298.2 *Parish Neighbourhood Watch Scheme* - Cllr Evans had met with Lorraine Hemphrey but had nothing further to report at this time.

Signed _____ Chairman

299. SUPER-FAST BROADBAND

Cllr Coleman closed the meeting at 19.56.

Project Manager, Peter Corfield, reported that the original intent to bid for funding to install Super-fast Broadband within the Broomfield & Kingswood Parish area had developed into a joint bid with the Parishes of Leeds and Hollingbourne, with the help and support of KCC. The title would be 'East Maidstone rural Superfast Broadband Project'. An initial 'Expression of Interest' had been submitted to DEFRA for assessment and we will be informed by 19th March whether DEFRA will invite the submission of a formal application. If a full bid proved successful work would start this summer. The Project aims to bring fibre optic connections to the existing BT phone cabinets, then using the copper cabling currently in use, from there to our homes. Where this technology cannot be used, wireless connections will be deployed. Residents still need to register their interest in Super-fast Broadband if they have not already done so, to show the full strength of demand.

Mr Corfield is optimistic that the bid will be successful. He also reported that there is a Project aimed to help 'non-liners' to get online called 'Race Online' that the Parish would need to support and would require the 'Race Online' logo to be shown on the Parish website to validate the Parish's participation.

Cllr Coleman thanked Mr Corfield on behalf of the Parish Council for the work he has undertaken in this regard and for attending the Coffee Shop at the Village Hall held Saturday 4th February where he had addressed residents on the issue.

Cllr Coleman re-opened the meeting at 20.05.

Cllr Forster stated that it was necessary to display the details and logo of 'Race Online' on the website as soon as possible. It was thus agreed for Mr Corfield to liaise directly with the Webmaster. Cllr Forster would ascertain whether every internet user in any one household should register or if voting was permitted only once per household and it was also agreed that the information should be included in the March edition of the Parish magazine.

ACTION – Cllr Forster / Clerk

300. FINANCES

300.1 *Responsible Finance Officer's report* was read to Councillors and retained on file. The following issues were resolved:-

- (i) The bank reconciliation for January was approved and signed by the Chairman
- (ii) Payments were agreed and cheques signed by Cllrs Cooper & Evans

ACTION - RFO

Cllr O'Neill expressed concern at the over-spend of staff costs – Chairman advised that both Clerks work a lot of hours that they don't claim for and that their workload has increased due largely to MBC and KCC cutbacks. Cllr Beaney asked for the hours worked by the Clerks to continue to be monitored. Cllr Evans proposed that staff costs be reviewed on a monthly basis from April and included as an agenda item within 'Finance' at each meeting as 'Staff costs'. This was seconded by Cllr O'Neill and agreed by all.

ACTION - Clerk

Cllr Evans proposed that funds be transferred from contingency funding for staff costs and Webmaster services that had also now exceeded the 2010/11 budget, seconded by Cllr Beaney and agreed by all.

300.2 *Concurrent Functions* - confirmation has been received from MBC that the CF grant will remain at the same level in 2012/13 as 2011/12, i.e. £7,000 (£2,000 more than budgeted for)

300.3 *Financial Regulations review* - RFO requested that this item is carried over to April due to her being unable to attend the March Parish Council meeting.

300.4 *Quotes to refurbish / replace village signs* – Cllr Evans had received one quote and will pursue two additional quotes for this work.

ACTION – Cllr Evans

Cllr Evans extended the Parish Council's thanks to Cllr West for repairing the notice board in Broomfield at no cost to the Parish Council.

301. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN / VISIONING EXERCISE

301.1 An initial, draft presentation was given by Cllr Baker on 1st February attended by Cllrs Beaney,

Signed _____ Chairman

Coleman, O'Neill, West and both Clerks. Cllr Baker had prepared and showed a Powerpoint presentation prior to it being presented at the inaugural public meeting to be held on 19th March at the Village Hall. The presentation was considered by all to be extremely professional and clearly explained the objectives. Event advertising strategy was discussed, also that a further meeting would be held on 12th March re: final arrangements, details, etc. before the public event on the 19th. Cllr Baker was thanked by everyone for the research and work he had already undertaken in this regard. He had subsequently produced and circulated associated notes for the information of all Members.

Clerk to request details of Visioning Exercise meeting to be published on the front page of the March K&B News. **ACTION - Clerk**

301.2 Delegation of limited authority to Cllr Baker – The RFO suggested that Cllr Baker be allowed limited financial authority for essential work on this project including payment of hall hire, purchase of paper, etc. Cllr Evans proposed that Cllr Baker be permitted to spend up to £250 if required without consultation with Members, seconded Cllr Beaney and agreed by all.

Cllr Evans expressed concern regarding the funding of the Neighbourhood Plan. Clerk advised that it was proposed for the Forum to address relevant applications and the provision of funding of this project.

302. CODE OF CONDUCT / LOCALISM ACT / REGISTER OF INTERESTS

Clerk had previously circulated a letter to all Members from MBC's Head of Corporate Law, Paul Fisher that outlines the requirements under the Localism Act in regard to a new Code of Conduct, maintaining a Register of Interests and displaying same on the Parish Website. Clerk had also provided Members with a copy of the Register of Interests form for completion and return. **ACTION - Clerk**

Cllr Coleman proposed holding an early meeting of the F & GP meeting in order to agree what action should be taken in regard to a Code of Conduct pertaining to this Parish Council. RFO to circulate dates ASAP.

ACTION - RFO

303. KINGSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Clerk had been contacted by School Governor and resident, Faye Rouse, requesting a meeting with representative Members of the Parish Council with a view to working together re: forthcoming projects, etc. Cllr Coleman agreed to liaise initially and with a view to requesting that one of the Governors considers becoming a Councillor, particularly as there is currently one vacancy. Clerk advised that this liaison might be a good opportunity to encourage young parents / members of the community to become involved in the Neighbourhood Plan project. **ACTION – Cllr Coleman**

304. ACTIONS & OUTCOMES INDEXING

Having given the matter of an A&O index considerable thought, Cllr Coleman was unable to put forward any useful suggestions in this regard and requested this item be removed from future agendas.

305. REPORTS

(i) Affordable Housing, 2nd February 2012 - Clerk

Report had been previously circulated to all Members; received and retained on file.

306. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Cllr Coleman referred to the Clerk's report dated 2nd February (see Min 305). Following a meeting that day with Cllr Parvin and Rural Housing Enabler, Tessa O'Sullivan, it was proposed holding an early meeting with Cabinet Member, Cllr John Wilson, Andrew Connors and other MBC Housing Options Team members in regard to the allocation process and lack of consultation on the part of MBC, with the Parish Council. Clerk to arrange meeting date as soon as possible. **ACTION - Clerk**

307. PARISH FORUM

Cllr Beaney reported that 'hits' were better than last month and whilst there has been some interest shown by residents regarding the Neighbourhood Plan, Cllr Beaney remains disappointed at the low usage re: local news, etc. being discussed using the Forum.

Signed _____ Chairman

308. IN-HOUSE TRAINING / INFORMATION FOR NEW COUNCILLORS

See Min 290. The Clerk suggested a change to this Agenda item for subsequent meetings to read, 'Information for New Councillors'. As per the consensus at the previous meeting, the Clerk had circulated a draft information sheet for the perusal of Members, intended as a useful guide for potential and new Councillors. Cllr O'Neill had not yet received a copy; it was thus agreed that this item should be carried forward and discussed at the March meeting under the heading 'Information for New Councillors'.

ACTION - Clerk

309. RECREATION AND SPORTS FIELD

309.1 *Weekly Safety Inspections* – Reports were received from Cllr Forster and retained on file. Cllr Forster reported that one of the stiles into sports field is deteriorating. Cllrs thus requested A/Clerk to obtain 3 quotes to repair stile and fencing around the Sports field.

ACTION – A/Clerk

309.2 *Scout Group Lease* – due to Cllr Cooper's resignation as Chairman the Lease is now unable to be signed; A/Clerk had thus cancelled the Scout Group Chairman's attendance at this meeting. Cllr Coleman proposed that the Contract be re-drafted and that former Councillor, Gareth Davies, be requested to check it prior to further action being taken. This was seconded by Cllr Evans and agreed by all.

ACTION – A/Clerk

309.3 *Playdale quote* - Total cost of quote for toddler swings is £2,726.00 including safety tiles and soil removal. Cllrs requested A/Clerk to check with Insurers to ascertain whether the PC is required to install safety tiles. Cllr Evans proposed that depending on the Insurer's response the swings be purchased, seconded Cllr West and agreed by all.

ACTION –

A/Clerk???

309.4 *Footpath to Sports Field* – A/Clerk had spoken with the owner of the field abutting the Sports Field regarding a public footpath to the Sports Field. The owner had agreed that *should this be the only and final resolution* she would discuss with the Parish Council, the issue of releasing an area of her land to establish a public right of way from the Charlesford Avenue bridleway to the Sports Field.

310. QUEENS DIAMOND JUBILEE PARISH CELEBRATIONS

Cllr Coleman observed that many local Parish Councils were getting involved with organizing celebratory events to mark the Queen's Jubilee. The Village Hall Committee was organizing such an event at the Hall which would be open for all residents to attend and enjoy. Cllr Coleman hoped that Members would support the Hall Committee in this venture and due to the Parish Council having resolved not to be involved in any other way, proposed the Parish Council make a donation, perhaps a cake, to the event to mark this very special occasion.

Cllr Evans proposed that £100 be donated to the Village Hall Committee to be used in connection with the Jubilee celebrations, seconded by Cllr West. The vote was carried: 4 in agreement, 2 against and with 1 abstention.

ACTION - RFO

311. ROADS AND PAVEMENTS

311.1 *Damage to bus shelter, Casyer Drive* - Clerk had forwarded to Karen Alderton, MBC, details of the public danger concerns expressed by Cllr O'Neill at the meeting held 9th January. On 12th January Ms Alderton replied by e-mail, "Once the Insurers agree the quote I am happy to proceed and get the shelter repaired. So hopefully things will move quite quickly from next week". Nothing further has been heard to date, Clerk would continue to chase.

ACTION - Clerk

311.2 *Complaints re: mud / blocked gullies, Gravelly Bottom Road* – Clerk had received several complaints regarding mud being deposited on the highway by the heavy vehicles associated with the tree felling and coppicing work in GB Road. Additionally the gullies were blocked between properties Uplands and Gravelly Hill, exacerbated by the extra mud and debris from the harvesting - KHS ref. 17316798 refers. Clerk had e-mailed details to Charles Dutton of Prior & Ricketts, the company responsible, but to date had received no response. KHS have subsequently attended and cleared the mud from the gullies but they still appear to be blocked.

Cllr O'Neill queried the low number of salt bins around the village and recalled that there were several more when he first moved to the Parish. Cllr O'Neill agreed to compile a report showing the location of the 'missing' bins; Clerk advised that the village does not score sufficient points under the KHS matrix system

to warrant being provided with additional bins so considered it unlikely that more could be obtained; the last new one installed at the west end of Charlesford Avenue had been funded by KCC Councillor, Jenny Whittle.

ACTION- Cllr O'Neill

311. CORRESPONDENCE

- (i) 25/1 - Anne Brighton, Orbit Homes re: Affordable Housing allocation and other issues at Peter Pease Close; Clerk had replied 6/2
- (ii) MBC – confirmation that the current vacancy on the Parish Council can be filled by way of co-option – Clerk will advertise the vacancy accordingly, including March K&B News and Website **ACTION – Clerk**
- (iii) Letter of thanks received from HOKH for donation of £50

Cllr Evans queried the need to have a 'correspondence' item on the agenda which he described as being 'archaic'. Cllr Coleman disagreed and considered that this is a valid and necessary agenda item which in any case, was 'pruned' to a minimum. He suggested an alternative would be to have the correspondence file available at PC meetings for Councillors to peruse. (Clerk's note: most letters 'in' or 'out' are retained 'on file' with their respective reports / file, e.g. Affordable Housing, Sports Field, Roads and Pavements, etc.)

313. ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING'S AGENDA

- (i) Agenda item 'Correspondence' – Cllr Evans
- (ii) Salt bins – Cllr O'Neill

314. ANY OTHER INFORMATION

- (i) Cllrs Coleman and Forster would be attending the Police Forum at Headcorn on 22nd February
ACTION – Cllrs Coleman / Forster
- (ii) Cllr Evans would attend the MBC Post Consultation Conference at the Village Hotel, Maidstone on 29th February
ACTION – Cllr Evans
- (iii) Cllr Coleman would be attending the Twinning Group committee meeting on 29th February
ACTION – Cllr Coleman
- (iv) Cllrs Baker and West would be attending forthcoming KALC / ACRK Communities and Neighbourhood Planning Road Shows
ACTION – Cllrs Baker / West

315. PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

No information received since previous meeting

316. PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS

The next full Meeting of the Parish Council will be held on **Monday 5th March 2012** at Kingswood and Broomfield Village Hall, Gravelly Bottom Road, Kingswood commencing 7.30pm.

There was no further business; Cllr Coleman closed the meeting at 21.34.