**SMARDEN PARISH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING 11TH DECEMBER 2017**

Present: John Lowings, Mark Wilson, Sarah Ellison, Jocelyn Craig, Jo Morton, Marion Hudson, Pete Watts, Brian Bristow, Geraldine Dyer and Catherine Stanley (Clerk).

17 Parishioners present.

**1. APOLOGY**

Cliff Ridley

**2. LIST OF THE DEPARTED**

Arthur Austen

**3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13th NOVEMBER 2017**

The minutes of the meeting of 13Th November 2017 were agreed and signed by the Chairman and publication on the website agreed.

**4. PLANNING**

**Application No: 17/01792/AS**

**Proposal:** Insertion of 4No. Conservation roof lights in southern elevation and 3No. Conservation roof lights in northern elevation of existing detached annexe.

Location: Tolhurst Farm, Pluckley Road, Smarden TN27 8NL

Comments: No Comment

**5. BUDGET**

Catherine presented a draft budget. This was discussed and it was agreed to finalise it at the next meeting.

**6. BURIAL GROUND**

Nothing to report

**7. POST OFFICE**

John declared an interest and left the room. Mark took the Chair.

Jocelyn gave an update. The Survey has been posted to 556 houses. There is to be 1 reply per household which will go to the Post Office in a sealed box by 31st December. An independent third party will analyse the results and in the New Year there will be a Parish Meeting to discuss the way forward.

Sarah then clarified that the money which is due to be received for the MUGA and the Children’s play area should not be used as part of any business plan for the village shop and post office. The Village Shop must demonstrate that it is viable in its own right and these entities should not be tied together. If the Village Shop failed the MUGA and Children’s Play area could be compromised if they are linked. Sarah expressed her disappointment to see in the leaflet produced by Gary Mitchell and his team that they appear to think that these entities are somehow linked. It must also be remembered that this money will only be forthcoming when houses are built and substantially occupied which may be several years at the very least. Sarah was concerned about potential blurring of the lines.

It was confirmed that Mike Barkway, on behalf of the Charter Hall Trustees was shown a draft of the survey and covering letter and that some of his amendments were incorporated into that letter. It therefore seems to be inconsistent subsequently to see his name as a signatory of the group of people who have challenged the Parish Council.

It is simply not correct to say that a building on the Minnis will not set a precedent. A precedent is a very dangerous word in planning as are conditions. The word is used all the time to justify a planning application and is difficult to refute.

Sarah expressed her concern that the ‘proposed’ Local Green Space adjacent to the Charter Hall which has formed part of the agreement with Gladman to receiving planning permission for 50 houses is being called a village green to replace the Minnis. It is not yet agreed with any proposed Developer. Gladman is not the Developer. This land will only be finally agreed with a Developer, and will at some time in the future be transferred to a Trust to maintain the land as a Local Green Space. This will not be the Minnis, it may not be maintained as the Minnis and to say it will be a new village green, is jumping the gun. This is unknown.

Marion confirmed that the leaflet is factually misleading. Gary added that he felt there would be cross correlation of both uses. Marion considered that it was factually misleading as the vote at the meeting on13th September was for the ‘*concept of a village shop and post office*’ and not the concept of a village shop and post office on the Minnis.

Mark commented that he did not consider that the shop would be viable. The Minnis is an historic part of the village and should be preserved for historical purposes.

There was a lengthy discussion was it was agreed that the discussions could continue.

Marion and Jocelyn are to liaise with Gary with regard to a Parish Meeting in the New Year

The subject being finished John re-entered the room.

**8. MINNIS and CORNES MEADOW**

Nothing to report

**9. HIGHWAYS and LORRYWATCH**

Brian reported that the parapet on the Vesper Hawk footpath has collapsed. KCC Highways have advised that they do not recognise it as a highway. This has now been passed onto the Footpaths Group.

The hedges at the Burnthouse Cross roads have been cut lower.

**10. CORRESPONDENCE**

Nothing to report

**11. FINANCE and MONTHLY ACCOUNTS**

Accounts - Copies of the accounts for November were presented and the items of expenditure for December were approved.

**12. COMMUNICATIONS**

Catherine confirmed that the item for the Parish Magazine has been submitted.

**13. REPORTS OF MEETINGS ATTENDED/FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

Nothing to report.

**14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Claire Brown discussed the possibility of purchasing additional Christmas lights for the village. She has made initial discussions with a professional lighting company. It was agreed that this was a positive idea and that it would be considered in greater depth in the New Year.

Geraldine raised the proposal to change the Parliamentary Boundaries as proposed by the Parliamentary Commission of England. She commented that there is still time to submit comments online.

Jocelyn advised that Gill Bromley is reviewing the Emergency Plan.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.45pm.