

BOUGHTON MALHERBE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING held on 17th January 2012 at 7.30pm
in Grafty Green Village Hall

PRESENT- Councillors: Mr R Turner (Chairman)

Mr R Galton
Mrs S Close
Mr M Hitchins
Mr S Wickens
Mrs P Anderson (Clerk)
Mrs C King (Clerk to be)

Cllr Jenny Gibson

PCSO Siobhan de Burca
PCSO Alan Beech

5 Members of the Public

1. TO ACCEPT APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Jenny Gibson, no apologies were received from Richard Thick.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST & REGISTER OF INTEREST CHANGES

There were no declarations of Interest and no Register of Interest changes.

3. APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 15th November 2011 having previously been distributed were unanimously **agreed** the official copy was signed as a true record by the Chairman.

4. LOCAL POLICING

4.1 Police Report

PCSO Siobhan de Burca introduced her replacement PCSO Alan Beech; she is officially leaving on 16th March because she is being transferred to North Downs. Alan Beech told us that he had been a PCSO for 9.5 years in Medway and had spent the last 4.5 years as a Supervisor, since the re-organisation this position no longer existed and so had opted to come to Maidstone. The Chairman thanked Siobhan for all that she had done for the Community and she in turn thanked us for making her stay such an enjoyable one.

Crime Figures:

| | | |
|-----|---|---------------------------------------|
| Nov | 1 | Armed (Metal Bar) Robbery Post Office |
| | 1 | Theft in Dwelling – False Allegation |
| Dec | 0 | |
| Jan | 0 | |

4.2 Speedwatch

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PA reported that since the last meeting there had been no Speedwatch sessions, mainly due to the dark mornings but also because of the problems with promises for a new Database. The Chairman noted that speed is generally increasing through the village and sessions should begin again as soon as possible. An email had been received in fact today saying that a new countrywide Database has been developed which is being put through its paces, on completion we will receive it. In the meantime the Speedwatch Co-ordinator Keith Anderson would be emailing the Speedwatch Manager and the Chief Superintendent to complain and find out how long this would take.

5. HIGHWAY & FOOTWAY MATTERS

5.1 Potholes & Road Slippage

The Clerk reported that there were a few potholes in Woodcock Lane marked out for repair and she asked if there were any others, the Chairman said there was a large pothole at Noahs Ark as well as one by the property known as Greycot and at the bottom of Liverton Hill. Chris Wheal gave the Clerk a letter which summarised his efforts to date with regard to the road slippage on Lenham Road. Despite his enormous efforts still nothing had been completed and he asked that the Parish Council

now take it over as he had become completely disillusioned with it.

ACTION PA

5.2 Gully & Carriageway below Stream Farm

PA reported that the Hill is due to be closed for 2 weekends, with the first one starting last weekend for investigation, it is hoped that a plan will be put in place to sort this out.

ACTION PA

5.3 Water Leak – Liverton Hill

Following the first closure last weekend some work had been carried out at the top of the hill and at the moment, partly because it hadn't rained recently, the hill was dry. The clerk had requested that the gullies were cleansed and had pointed out that a lot of the problems were caused by gullies being blocked. Promises had been made that this was on a schedule to be done by the end of December, but it hadn't, this had been done last weekend but according to RT & Mike Davidson not all of them had been jetted. PA would chase the Drainage Manager who had also promised that as soon as a new schedule was prepared it would be emailed.

ACTION PA

5.4 Liverton Hill – HGV's

This was still ongoing and a report was due out very soon. One of the suggestions is something called 'Lorry Watch'. Jenny Whittle explained that this would involve residents noting registration numbers of HGVs that had flouted weight/height & width restrictions or other road regulations and reporting back to Trading Standards officers who could issue fines of up to £1000. The scheme would, as she understood it only apply to domestic registered vehicles as pursuing foreign registered vehicles through the courts is nigh impossible (and we know the issue of foreign HGVs being particular offenders!). More details however will be available when Kent Highways publishes its freight transport strategy, which she is told will be done in the next few months. Interested parishes will be able to put themselves forward as pilot areas.

5.5 Footpath Sign opposite Liberton House

This has now been replaced.

5.6 Bowley Lane Signs

The signs are due to be replaced, they could not be re-erected because they were damaged.

ACTION PA

5.7 Grass Verges Woodcock Lane

According to Kent Highways the verges have not been registered, which means that they are owned by them. They will come out and decide whether they consider the stones are a safety hazard.

ACTION PA

5.8 Liverton Hill Sign Boards

The stolen signs had still not been replaced. PA would chase.

ACTION PA

5.9 Elmstone Hole Lane

All done

5.10 Speed Indicator Device

PA asked Jenny Whittle if she had any more to report on this. She explained that the cost is likely to be around £5k, it would have to be a 50/50 split and then only if there were enough money left in her Member Fund which doesn't amount to much when it has to be shared with 15 other Parishes, the likelihood being that next year there would be even less available. This may have to go on the back burner for a while as it was unlikely that the Parish Council would have funds available.

ACTION PA

5.11 Water Leak junction Eastwood Rd/Headcorn Rd

A promise has been made that the gullies will be cleansed and pipes jetted by the end of tomorrow especially because of the current cold weather. Obviously there are concerns of the danger and possibility of accidents as the water turns to ice.

ACTION PA

6. RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

6.1 No. 59 Bus

Following the meeting held on Monday the Saturday service will continue, current contract runs until April 2014. Arriva reported that passengers using the Saturday service average 40 although this is not conclusive. They also reported that the Monday-Friday service is being reviewed but any changes would not take place until April. John Collins asked that the 07.10am departure from Grafty should not be any earlier or the 16.10 departure from Maidstone should not be any later.

ACTION PA

6.2 Emergency Plan

Once again nothing has been done about this and still needs dealing with. Nothing had been put in the magazine to see if anyone in the Parish would like to be involved. It was **Agreed** Robert, Ron and the Clerk would go ahead and formulate a plan.

ACTION PA

6.3 Diamond Jubilee

Arrangements for the Jubilee celebrations on the 4th June are being handled by the Village Hall Committee. There is to be a Beacon at the top of Church Road, which will be lit at around 10-10.30pm. In addition Marquees have been rented for the 'fete field', a band organised, Pig roast booked, bouncy castle hired and other events will also be arranged. Hopefully funds should total around £2000 made up of £700 from the Village Millennium Fund £600 Grant from the Parish Council, together with monies raised from the Frog Racing Evening in March (all figures are approximate).

6.4 Draft Infrastructure Report

The above had been circulated to all the Members prior to the meeting. It referred to the Draft Core Strategy/Infrastructure plan which has highlighted a number of key concerns, particularly Water Supply, Sustainable & Economic Transport System- Buses, Road & Rail. Library, Rural Broadband Facilities, Refuse Disposal and Recycling, Theatre. The Institution of Civil Engineers have pointed out serious shortcomings in the current infrastructure across the whole country and alarm bells should be ringing in every Town Hall. The plan should be upgraded from Draft to implementation. One example was highlighted which is Grove Green as it was built largely on appeal without the necessary infrastructure and has been blighted by the inherent problems.

6.5 Safety of Reservoir in Church Road

4 Lifebuoys have been put around the reservoir

7. PUBLIC SESSION

It was reported that a large amount of rubbish had been dumped up in Church Road where the sheep are. PA said she would report this, although not sure what would happen as it was on private land.

ACTION PA

8. PLANNING

8.1 Planning Applications Received

The following applications were considered and recommendations made:

8.1.1 Judge House Farm, Woodcock Lane, Boughton Malherbe -MA/11/1921

Application for erection of a three bay, two storey agricultural store to be used for storage & parking
Recommendation: No objection but we need to request a condition that the 1st floor must not be used for any purpose other than a store, and if in the future there was a requirement for accommodation a new application should be submitted

8.1.2 The Barn, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green – MA/11/2056

Application for Listed Building Consent for reinstatement of fire damage to timber-framed building(dwelling)
Recommendation: No objection

8.2 Planning Decisions Received

The following Decisions received from MBC were **Noted**:

8.2.1 Orchard Cottage Farm, Headcorn Road, Grafty Green ME17 2AU – MA/11/1165

Construction of a Sand School
MBC: Granted with Conditions

8.2.2 Thornden Farmhouse, Lenham Road, Headcorn TN27 9LH – MA11/1392

Change of use of agricultural land to recreational area for the use of the main house.
MBC: Refused

9. CORRESPONDENCE – The following correspondence was Noted:

KHS –Highways & Transportation Tracker Survey (filled in & ret'd 2/12/11)
MBC – Review of Polling Districts, Polling Places and Polling Stations
MBC – Core Strategy Public Participation Consultation 2011
KALC – Minutes of Meeting 15/11/11
MBC – Allowances Parish Councils-Report of the Parish Independent Remuneration Panel
English Rural Housing Assoc. – The Bulletin Newsletter
South East Water –Letter re Grafty Green Fire 5/1/11
South East Water - “ “ “ “ 11/1/12
Chris Wheal – Letter re state of Lenham Road
Chris Wheal – Letter re Overflowing Drain Junction Eastwood/Lenham Road

10. MATTERS OF REPORT – To receive reports from**10.1 County & Borough Councillors****Jenny Whittle**

Jenny updated the members on the progress of the 30mph speed limit from Liverton Hill through to Grafty Green. Ben Hilden had promised to advertise a new Traffic Regulation Order by the end of January.

She also reported that MBC had secured £1.3m of funding for gypsy and traveller pitches in the borough and she was working with the Borough trying to secure appropriate sites in Maidstone.

She responded to the points raised by Chris Wheal relating to Highways issues and advised that the Parish Council should inform Hugh Robertson MP on the problems relating to low water pressure in and around the village should the ongoing discussions with South East Water prove unsuccessful.

Jenny also updated the meeting with the latest on the Sat Nav and HGV issues. KCC had reported that the Authority will be taking part in a summit to look at solutions nationally by standardising data exchange which would provide information on weight and with restrictions and how sat nav providers can use this information to send vehicles down more suitable routes. This would also be used for lorry routes too and to provide information to foreign lorries on the problems they cause.

Jenny Gibson

Jenny was not present

Richard Thick was not present

10.2 Chairman

Robert reported on two meetings that he had attended since the last Parish Council meeting in November

1. The Scrutiny Committee meeting discussed the new proposals for the replacement of the Concurrent Functions scheme. Tonbridge and Malling reported on the system that they currently use, which has a very similar base to the current scheme used by MBC. There is however, one difference, if the Government grant to support the rates increases then the parishes get more money, but if the grant is cut (as now) then the parish support cash falls. This fall is in line with the reduction from central Government.

The Scrutiny committee criticised the Borough team for trying to mend a scheme "that was not broken". The new MBC scheme was held up as being unfriendly in its approach and probably unworkable. The parish Services Scheme team have been given until now 7th Feb to present their ideas and seriously consider the points that had been raised. Watch this space!

2. Planning Meeting at Langley Parish Hall. This meeting covered Planning, Action With Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) and the Localism Act. I was very pleased to note that we seem to understand the aspects of Planning as well as the appeals process.

The speaker for ACRK was Carl Adams (a useful contact) he discussed how he could use his experience in Community led projects such as Parish Plans, Community owned Shops, Community owned pubs, Community owned Transport services, Affordable Housing, and Neighbourhood plans. In addition his office was available to do Rural Health checks. Parish Plans and community led plans are important and need considering by our Parish.

Clive Powell from KALC spoke about Localism and its meaning. A good example is Speedwatch, something that the Parish has an involvement with. Where the Parish undertakes functions themselves which would have otherwise been handled by MBC.

The stress came on Village Surveys into what Parishioners want, it is important that the Parish Council know. Also what services do we want to undertake for ourselves that are currently performed by MBC

A very important meeting at which important points were highlighted. A good learning meeting for myself and well worth giving up a morning.

One point of information is that all PPS categories will disappear under the simplified planning regs. This had been due to come into effect by the end of 2011 but is now likely to be April

11. FINANCE**11.1 To note Income received since last Meeting**

There had been no income received since the last Meeting.

11.2 To authorise any payments made since the last Meeting

There had been no payments made since the last Meeting.

11.3 To resolve that any cheques presented can be signed

It was proposed by Cllr Close and seconded by Cllr Turner "that the Council approve the following payments". This was **Agreed** and the following cheque was signed:-

| | |
|--|-------|
| | £ |
| 000362 Thurnham Parish Council (contr. to JPG) | 86.15 |

11.4 To note balance at Bank

The Accounts Book and bank statement were circulated to the Members and it was **Noted** that the balance was £2811.38.

11.5 Budgets

The Clerk distributed a report showing the Budget for the rest of the year to March 31st 2012 together with the Budget to March 31st 2013. The current year showed a Precept balance in hand on 10th January of £1152, part of PA's salary together with any monies due to the new Clerk would be paid from this (950) which would leave a balance of £202 for the Reserve Fund. The balance in hand on 10th January of Concurrent monies was £1684, once all estimated payments had been made to the Church, Gardening Club, Village Hall etc plus the balance of the Clerk's salary of £400 it would leave a balance of -£2. At this point Councillor Hitchins asked why there was a budget of £200 for the Gardening Club when they currently had quite a healthy bank balance. It was explained that a grant was given to the Gardening Club mainly for the maintenance of the flower planters and flower display around the village which enhances our Rural Community. He suggested that the question should be raised with the Gardening Club Committee as to whether they needed this money, the Chairman asked MH to find this out. Councillors perused the budget for 2012/13 (see attached) and it was **'Agreed'** that the Precept requirement be increased by £200 to £2100 which would be added to the Reserve Fund, the form was signed by the Chairman and Clerk and would be sent off to MBC.

ACTION MH

11.6 Concurrent Functions

The Clerk reported that the current grant would be left as it is for 2012/13, there would be no further cut this year. The proposed Parish Services Scheme as it is now known had gone before the combined meeting of the Corporate Service & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee and was not met with a favourable reaction, a decision was deferred until 10th January – now 7th February 2012.

ACTION PA

12. BOUGHTON MALHERBE HISTORY SOCIETY

Ron Galton reported that nothing had changed since the last meeting.

13. FIRE AT BARN – Report from Chris Wheal

At a meeting held on 21st November with Kent Fire & Rescue Service attended by Chris Wheal and Robert Turner, it was agreed that a meeting should be held in Grafty Green Village Hall on 31st January, this would not be a meeting to question KFRS on what did or didn't go wrong on the day of the Fire but more about fire prevention. Chris reported that he is going with Robert Turner to KFRS HQ on Thursday (19th Jan) to sort out arrangements for that meeting. They will also be discussing the maintenance of Fire Hydrants, which, in accordance with National Guidelines should be done out in rural areas every 3-6 months and the suggested maximum in urban areas is 2 yearly. At the moment inspections are being carried out approximately every four years which is unacceptable as is borne out with the consequences of the Fire at the Barn. Local residents are to be encouraged to help maintain fire hydrants.

**14 ANY OTHER INFORMATION/ITEMS ARISING
GRAFTY GREEN WATER SUPPLY – Report Ron Galton**

The fire at The Barn had revealed shortcomings in the water supply for the purposes of fire fighting in the village, since that time the Parish Council has been in discussion with South East Water to try to improve the situation. The main problem stems from the fact that the same water main system supplies fire hydrants and households.

Whilst there are recommendations in National Guidance Documents for providing adequate supplies of water to fire hydrants they are not a legal requirement and there is no obligation upon South East Water to follow them. It is the opinion of the Parish Council, based upon the failure of the system to supply sufficient water to fire hydrants during the fire that all properties are at an unnecessarily high risk unless the supply is upgraded to meet National Guidance.

To date South East Water say that the water pressure is controlled at a level to minimise the

Possibility of leaks and burst pipes and to increase it substantially to provide more fire fighting capability would cause failures in the system. However, there are possible solutions to explore and discussion will continue.

In parallel with the problems of water for fire fighting the Parish Council has also discussed the numerous complaints of insufficient pressure at properties with South East Water and we have obtained agreement that, if we submit a list of properties which suffer from low pressure, they will be investigated with a view to improvement, provided that the pressure is below the minimum legal requirement. Unfortunately, based upon experience during the fire, the minimum legal requirement for households is inadequate for the effective use of fire hydrants fed off the same water main.

An article is to be put in the magazine asking Parishioners that If they believe their water pressure is inadequate they are to contact Ron and advising them that a very rough check can be carried out at a time when they think the pressure will be at its lowest, and simply filling a 1 gallon (4.5 litres) container at the kitchen tap. If it fills in less than 30 seconds then there is no point in pursuing a complaint but if it takes longer then the date, time, and number of seconds to fill the container are to be noted. The information will be given to South East Water who will then investigate, there are no guarantees and it could take some time.

Jenny Whittle suggested that it might be a good idea to keep Hugh Robertson MP in the picture and advised that Angela Stainton James be informed of what was going on with South East Water, and also not to forget about the Freedom of Information Act.

Tree Planting

RT reported that he had been approached by the Gardening Club asking if there was anywhere that trees could be planted within the Parish. Robert had suggested up by the Chilston this was **Agreed**.

Surplus Funds History Society

Councillor Hitchins referred members to the Minutes of 17th August 2010 and asked when any surplus funds would be returned to the Parish Council from the History Society. It was '**Agreed**' that any surplus funds should be given back to the Parish Council by the end of the Financial Year and discussion took place with regard to what should happen to this money and that perhaps it should come back into Reserves and could be used for such things as an Interactive sign etc.. Ron Galton Is to report back at the next Parish Council Meeting **ACTION RG**

15 DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

20th March 2012

8th May 2012

There being no further matters to discuss, the meeting closed at 10.20pm

Signed. Dated