



Rolvenden Parish Council

In accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 this meeting was held as a virtual meeting.

Minutes of the virtual meeting conducted at 7.30pm on 17th November 2020.

Present: Cllr Mrs D Curtain (Chairman), Cllr E Barham, Cllr S Bryant, Cllr Mrs F May, Cllr A Johnstone, Cllr Mrs I Newman, Cllr G Tiltman and Cllr Mrs T Turner,

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk and Responsible Officer

Absent: Councillor Mrs L Walker

Prior to the commencement of the business part of the meeting Tracey Kerly the Chief Executive of Ashford Borough Council joined to answer a number of questions that were posed by members of the Parish Council.

Q: Do Ashford Borough Council employ a housing inspector?

A: Properties are not inspected on a regular basis, however, statutory inspections are carried out and the Inspectors are required to report any issues back to the housing team.

Q: What is the housing policy/criteria for Monypenny?

A: Vacancies are advertised and the tenant chosen from those that apply.

Q: What, if anything, is being done to alleviate housing poverty in rural parishes?

A: Whilst the Borough Council have no schemes at the present time they would welcome Parish Councils coming forward with suitable sites.

Q: Why is so little regard given to the policies in the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan when considering planning applications in our Parish?

A: No answer was given as this question is more directed to the Head of Planning, this will be taken back to her.

Q: On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 10 being the most importance) what level of importance do you think the planning department should give to the opinions of locals i.e. the Parish Council, our ward member and our local plan, when considering planning applications for our Parish?

A: 10

Q: What is the current timetable for the road sweeper to attend in Rolvenden?

A: There is no defined timetable, the routes are planned according to the perceived need based on past need.

Q: Why have we not yet been reimbursed for our losses incurred through the Rolvenden Rocket?

A: This question will be taken away for a response.

Q: Why do Ashford Borough Council not make better use of the local knowledge that Parish Councils can provide?

A: We would welcome any initiative that could work, previous ideas have lacked support.

469. Apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence

470. Declarations of interest:

1. Declarations of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:

Cllr E Barham declared an interest in minute number 479 Planning matters as funding is from the S106 agreement re Halden Field.

2. Declarations of Members' Other Significant Interests:

Cllr Mrs D Curtain, Trustee of War Memorial Trust

Cllr E Barham, Trustee of Basil Russell Trust, Windmill Trust, Royal British Legion

Cllr Mrs I Newman, Trustee of War Memorial Trust

3. Declarations of Members' Other Interests:

Cllr Mrs I Walker, Rolvenden Village Fete, Secretary Rolvenden Football Club

Cllr S Bryant, Chairman Rolvenden Football Club

471. Minutes:

The minutes of the virtual meeting held on 20th October 2020 were submitted, agreed as a true record and were approved for signature at a time when restrictions placed on meetings by the Government have been removed.

472. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Tompsett landscaping	£2,070.00 (VAT £345.00)
Staff costs	£910.22
Litter picking	£120.00
My Village stores	£200.00
PKF Littlejohn LLP	£360.00 (VAT £60.00)
RBL Poppy Appeal	£17.00
De Fib Store	£514.80 (VAT £85.80)
HugoFox	£39.99 (VAT £6.66)

Funds received during the month:

S106 funds for the Streyte play area £29,881.91

Care bear donations £1,300.00

Councillors Curtain and Newman verified the transactions through the bank account.

Councillor Bryant expressed the wish that staff costs were broken down to the constituent parts, however this is not possible due to the restrictions of data protection legislation and it being personal information.

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report RPC/20/08**
- 2. To receive and acknowledge the financial movements for the period 1st April 2020 to 31st October 2020.**
- 3. To authorise the payment of the invoices presented at the meeting.**

473. Conclusion of Audit for the year ending 31st March 2020:

The Parish Council's external auditor, PKF Littlejohn LLP, have completed their work on the Parish Council's accounts and issued their report which states:

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

There are no other matters affecting their opinion which they draw to the attention of the Council.

474. Rolvenden Pre-school:

The following communication has been received from the pre-school:

"Our current situation is getting quite precarious due to a number of factors (mainly due to the dreaded Covid). Without help now we may struggle to remain open through into the next school year.

We began the year with a healthy bank balance, but the enforced closure due to lockdown meant that we lost income from fee paying parents. The government furlough scheme only paid a small portion of our wages. We are aware of 3 children who would have come to us on funded places who have pulled out due to covid. We also lost out on claiming additional pupil premium funding for disadvantaged families during the closure.

Since re-opening, our cleaning bill has increased 3 fold due to staff spending extra time each week cleaning as well as the cost of all the products used daily.

We are unable to run our usual fundraising efforts due to ongoing Covid restrictions and we are aware that many families are struggling financially at the moment anyway. This is also affecting the number of hours taken up by fee paying parents as many of them cannot afford as many hours as they would like.

We are looking at steps to reduce our outgoings by cutting our opening times to four full days per week. This will reduce our rent and wage bill. We have consulted with parents who would be affected and they are willing to move their children's days.

We are being as economical as possible with resources and not spending on new items at the moment. We do have plans to improve the garden thanks to a £1000 grant available from our local pre school collaboration, which must be used for improvements to the setting rather than ongoing running costs.

What we really need at the moment is a gift of money to go into the bank to support us with our running costs during this unprecedented time. We are still offering our parents a vital resource and the children attending our setting are thriving. We know there are many more local families who will benefit from our pre school in the future, provided we can ride the current storm and survive to see another year”.

Resolved: The Parish Council wish to support the Pre-school group and will make the sum of £2,000.00 available for running costs.

475. Stolen Funds:

The Insurance Company are yet to respond to the loss adjuster’s report. No response has been received from the Solicitor regarding the comments fed back regarding the letter from Lloyds Bank.

476. S106 funds and projects:

The legal agreement from Ashford Borough Council in respect of the Layne Play Area is still awaited, therefore it is unlikely that the installation of the new equipment will coincide with that at the Streyte as the order cannot be placed until such time as the agreement is to hand.

477. Pavilion project:

Further to the Parish Council meeting on 20th October, minute 462 refers, the War Memorial Trust have made contact with the various user groups to arrange a meeting to discuss the project, however due to the introduction of the second lockdown from 5th November to 2nd December the date has yet to be arranged.

Whilst the advice given is to establish a Community Interest Company to administer the project, until such time as the user groups have met and understood the implications in terms of the costs of running the facility and a charging basis formulated, this should be held in abeyance.

Early indications are that grant funding will be required to build the pavilion and current research of the major sport funders has shown that any grants being made available are Covid 19 related. It is therefore recommended that no further action is taken until such time as a realistic cash flow forecast is produced.

478. Land bequest:

The solicitor advises that he has again sent a chaser to the executors to sign the requisite documentation for the transfer of the land and allotments to the Parish Council.

The allotments at the present time are not protected by statute as they are privately owned, therefore at the present time it would be inappropriate for the Parish Council to fund improvements to the site as it could be sold. It would be more appropriate if works are urgent that the allotment holders contacted the executors to fund the works.

479. Planning matters:

1. **20/01355/AS – Rolvenden Primary School, Hastings Road, Rolvenden – Extension** to provide two classrooms and WC block to replace existing separate demountable's.

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application.

2. **20/01465/AS – Land south of Swiss Cottage, Rolvenden Hill, Rolvenden – Storage container** for the storage of animal feed and equipment (retrospective).

Resolved: The Parish Council objects to the application as no justification has been provided for the need for additional storage as to the knowledge of the Parish Council there are no horses kept at the site, therefore the existing stable complex would appear to be more than adequate.

3. **20/01489/AS – 10 Thornden Lane, Rolvenden – single storey front extension.**

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application.

4. **20/01536/AS – Land adjacent to 35 Gatefield Cottages, Gatefield Road, Rolvenden – Erection of a proposed holiday let cabin with associated access, parking and landscaping.**

Resolved: The Parish Council objects to the application on the following grounds: The development will intensify the overall density of the area, making it cramped and causing significant harm to the character of the area and the built pattern of the existing development, being characterised by mainly two storey dwellings in reasonable large plots.

It would result in the loss of an open piece of land that contributes in a positive manner to the visual amenity of the street scene.

It would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the AONB.

The homes at Gatefield were built in the 1920s as the first local "Homes for Heroes" following WW1 and as such have heritage value to the village. Their strong design features include hipped and catslide roofs, wide casement windows and real chimneys, with the homes being built in well spaced pairs.

The supporting documents state that the proposal meets RNP11 - it does not as the policy relates to conversions NOT new builds and this proposal would be in breach of clause c anyway in its effect on the amenity of the neighbours.

We believe it also does not meet or is in breach of all of the following :

Ashford Local Plan

HOU10 clauses a & b

HOU15

HOU3a clauses a,b & c plus reference to AONB

EMP11 - this is not an appropriate location, not least as the two neighbouring properties are bungalows for the elderly

ENV3a clause g

ENV3b ref to AONB

SP6 clauses a & h

Rolvenden NP

RNP1 clauses a,b,c & d

480. Merrington Park:

Councillor Barham has obtained details of the land owner and has written an initial letter, a response is awaited.

481. Other items for information:

Cllr Bryant raised the issue of leaves on the footpath from Maytham Hall down to Rolvenden Layne, Aspire are due to visit to clear if they haven't in the next week Tompsett Landscaping will be asked to clear.

Cllr Tiltman raised the issue of the verge opposite the Village Hall, a quote is being awaited from Aspire for the installation of wooden posts.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.30pm.