

ROLVENDEN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Minutes of meeting held Thursday 28th April 2016, 7.30pm, Rolvenden Village Hall

Copies of the meeting's agenda and the report from John Gibbons Educational Trust were put out for information. A full copy of the minutes of the 2015 Annual Parish Meeting was displayed with a copy of the parish council's unaudited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2016.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr Mr Duncan Murray, Chairman of the Parish Council.

Present: 59 residents, 9 parish councillors, KCC Member for Rolvenden, Michael Hill OBE
Clerk to the Council-Mrs J.Serra

Apologies for absence received from Ashford Ward Member- Mr Mike Bennett, Mrs Jane Hitchings
Mrs Jan Stickland.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. He first introduced Rolvenden's KCC Member Michael Hill to speak at the meeting as Mr Hill had to attend another annual parish meeting on the same evening after Rolvenden's

KCC Member for Rolvenden, Michael Hill OBE

KCC's financial problems were escalating with a loss of income of nearly £200million and there would be a tough two years ahead. Libraries have been kept open as an important community asset but they have lost some Community Wardens.

There is a pilot scheme for Voluntary Wardens being rolled out. The regeneration of Margate has been successful. Member's grants are still available and small projects in need of funding could make an application. Potholes are going to be dealt with and the condition of roads should improve by June. Operation Stack- plan to build a lorry park at a cost of £250million is to go ahead. The proposal is that it should be permanently available not only for Operation Stack. There is a consultation paper on the New Thames Crossing proposed for east of Gravesend. A reminder was given about the election for a new Police Commissioner. The KCC would have elections in 2017 and Mr Hill would be standing again.

There were no questions for Mr Hill and he left the meeting at 7.45pm to attend his next annual parish meeting.

Chairman's welcome: There was an election last May, with the number of candidates for the parish council being exactly as required to fill the vacancies and so were all elected unopposed. Several people have said they would stand if needed but the council was doing a good job and there was no reason to disrupt it
We said goodbye to four councillors who had 'done their bit' and welcomed four new councillors.

John Wilkins had a four year gap and is a very welcome returnee especially with his experience including as a former chairman.

Jane Marston also represents the Layne

Jacky Stace, for the Strete, has taken on the role of Highways co-ordination, which means chivvying KCC with regard to road problems. The faults on the roads in the parish do not have to be given to the parish council they can be reported by any person on the Kent Highways website.

Graham Tiltman, for the Strete, who is doing sterling work in setting up the parish council's new website

Each one is a great asset and alongside the other councillors serves Rolvenden well

The chairmen from other parishes are met regularly and many say that a monthly meeting should not take more than an hour. Even with a reduction in planning applications we are normally taking two hours and often more. On top of monthly meetings, there have been several special meetings to deal with the many issues arising.

The newsletter Rolvenden Update 2016 covers some of the headlines but to summarise.

The proposed development of up to 40 houses (Halden Field). There is a very clear and proven need for smaller houses for starter and also downsizing so that people can stay in the village. The proposal still has 2-bed houses –none, 3-bed houses-5, 4-bed houses-13, 5 & 6 bed houses- 8

We have made formal representations that this is not what Rolvenden needs and we believe the planners are agreeing with us as is our Borough Councillor.

Unofficially Taylor Wimpey are now suggesting removing 3 of the 3-bed houses and replacing with 3 houses of 1 or 2 bedrooms. This is in the right direction but does not begin to deal with the underlying requirement in Ashford's planning policy for a mix of housing to suit the local need and for Rolvenden that is for a mix of housing sizes but many more small houses that people can afford.

Taylor Wimpey say they can't afford to cut the number or sizes but that is really their commercial issue. However, there are still to be 14 'affordable' houses that is to rent or part ownership as at Glebe Field and Ashford are to be congratulated on holding out for this when some councils buckle to demands from developers to drop them.

As to the design of the estate, we believe that all these large houses cause excessive density. Also we want this estate to be something recognised as Rolvenden but in a modern way. It should not be just the same as estates in Ashford or wherever.

On a minor note. Do we approve of plastic dummy chimneys as on the properties in Glebe Field. They do not work and have no fireplaces beneath them. Should the new properties have fireplaces and working chimneys or simply delete the pretend chimneys. Do tell us.

Thanks to all councillors and other expert parishioners who have helped to analyse and advised on the huge document from Taylor Wimpey .

The new website: is much more attractive and easier to use. Please try it and give your feedback

We are very fortunate that Graham Tiltman has the expertise and enthusiasm to set it up and act as Web Master. If any societies want links or anyone has interesting local articles to write or recommend then again, let us know.

One very important matter, after 25 years, our clerk Jacqueline Serra is retiring. She has seen dozens of councillors come and go and many chairmen and she has provided the continuity. Sometimes the issues have been dull, or huge or plain difficult, throughout she has done what she does and kept it all ticking along making it seem simple.

Jacqueline, you have our grateful thanks and we wish you well and please accept this small token for all your dedication and hard work. (The clerk was presented with an enormous bouquet of flowers much to her surprise) Jacqueline is going to help with the overlap to smooth over the transition. We have a new clerk, Gary Willard who lives in Tenterden and is here at the meeting and I ask him to stand up to be introduced.

Reports from the following:

- Rolvenden Parish Council's newsletter-Rolvenden Update 2016 – copies had been hand delivered to households in the parish with copies left in the church , the village shop, and the pubs.
- Rolvenden Non Ecclesiastical Charities- there was no activity this year to report.
- Gibbons Educational Trust- printed summary was available- The John Gibbons Educational Trust is a trust set up many years ago from a small bequest. The object of the Trust is to assist young local people between the ages of 7 and 21 years with educational needs. The Trustees meet annually to discuss and award grants. The year started with £379.42 in the current account and £393.12 on deposit. We received two applications, a university student and the local Primary School. The total amount awarded being £150. Balances as of 31st March 2016 were £415.74 in the current account and £393.36 on deposit.
- Village Hall Management Committee: given by Mr F.May. He was pleased to say they have formed a team to look for grant funding for the Hall although none found at the moment. The Hall is now 16 years old and having to update electrics, security, plumbing etc as things go wrong or have to be brought up to current standards.
The large windows leak and are being patched for now but the time will come when this will not be an option. The hall continues to have fund raising events such as the Review last week and plans are on-going for events in the future. Bookings for the hall continue to come in

although more would be welcome. Hire charges for the Hall have had to be increased due to increased costs to the Hall. The previous increase was five years ago.

War Memorial Trust-report by Mr E.Barham. The Trust was established after the Great War to commemorate the fallen of Rolvenden. Trustees are directly appointed members of the community and those appointed by Rolvenden Parish Council. The principal duty is the maintenance of the war memorials in the village. It owns the playing fields in Layne and Streyte, including tennis courts, play areas and cricket ground although management of all these facilities is let to others, including the parish council for the play areas.

During the year Lewis Wood retired as Trustee just before his sad death and was replaced as a Co-optative Trustee by Ed Hoad. The newly elected Parish council appointed 4 representative Trustees. The Trustees are currently: Elected Trustees: Edward Barham- Chairman, Michael Hook-Secretary,

Ed Hoad, Antony Hinge, David Barham

Representative appointed by parish council: Peter Garrott, Irene Newman, Denise Curtain,

Brian Hindley

Accounts to 31st December 2015 show income of £4951 and a deficit for the year of £1153 against a surplus of £1053 in 2014. The resurfacing of Church Row cost £3313 for which we obtained a small contribution from the majority of the householders who rely on the road.

Portfolio of stocks and shares and some cash valued at £148,574 with cash of £1112.33, down marginally from last year due to market changes and the cost of surfacing Church Row

The Trust has registered its freehold titles for 3 plots of land owned; Streyte,Layne fields and War Memorial.

The Trust remains committed to provide funds to a pavilion project if that goes ahead. During the year we were approached by the Primary School with their Swimming Pool Project, being mindful of the sums we could realistically contribute we deferred a decision until as such time as other funds were forthcoming from the parish council, lottery and community grant sources and would probably contribute in a modest way then.

The Trust is in on-going negotiations involving a claim for land to the north of the cricket field, a settlement for which is within site

Basil Russell Trust- report by Mr Edward Barham. The Trust established in 1990 by the late Basil Russell, lifelong gardener at Hole Park and international table tennis referee, to benefit the youth of Rolvenden and surrounding parishes. The Chairman is my father on whose behalf I deliver this report. Investment portfolio valued at £231,247 with estimated gross annual income of £7822

Distributions totalling £1520.34 were made during the year including Stoolball, support for a medical student at university and other charitable request. The Trust is deliberately saving for the possibility of making significant contributions to the pavilion project.

However the Trustees are keen to receive any application from any individual or group of younger members of the community, perhaps up to leaving university age, who seek assistance with their studies, university expenses, travel projects or personal development.

Royal British Legion: report given by Mr Edward Barham:

The Legion continues to thrive in its traditional manner. Membership remains at about 50 and we have both lost and welcomed new members over the year. Our main events are the summer lunch reception held at Great Maytham in conjunction with the Ladies Section to be repeated on 12th June this year and our AGM and dinner in October.

Remembrance Sunday is the most significant event of our calendar and as in 2015, we will welcome all and any member of clubs, societies or individuals, particularly the wreath layers, to parade with us from the Bull to the church and back again after the service. The community spirit this creates is very notable.

The Women's section is currently balloting its members about its future following a decision by central office to merge the membership as one, disbanding the Ladies Section as a separate entity. That might be thought easy but the administrative burden of doing so is considerable for a branch with above average age. I understand that the Women's Section may reform itself as a friendship group without official affiliation and continue much as now.

We would like to thank Val Sutton for her work organising the Poppy Appeal to which so many members of the community give so generously. The sum raised in Rolvenden is very impressive.

Neighbourhood Watch- report given by Sian Reeves

Sian thanked all the residents involved in the scheme. The NHW scheme continues with success because of the members. The joint area Co-Ordinators: Jenny Wynter and Pam Murphy. There are over 100 active members and there is a need to be proactive rather than reactive. She reminded people of the need to get details of any suspicious behaviour of people such as age/skin tone/clothes/gait/distinguishing marks and details of vehicles: the registration number/make/model/colour
There are still issues with:

1. Bogus callers - fake police officers, reps from the utility companies/distraction burglaries
2. Scams - e-mails and telephone calls. Don't open e-mails where you don't recognise the sender and be careful not to open attachments. Do not give out any personal details

Rolvenden NHW has strong links with Biddenden NHW.

Recently a lost dog was sent as an update (example of community working together)

Don't advertise that you are going on holiday on *Facebook*

Crime prevention downloads are available at: www.kent.police.uk/yourguide

25 - 50% of crimes are preventable

A tip to remember for burglaries: "*daytime look, nighttime strike*" - be suspicious of unusual daytime activity - people watching properties.

Please come and find Pam or myself after the meeting for questions or new members.

Thank you again to the NHW community

Lyn Walker- Queens Birthday Celebrations in the village, Sunday 12th June on St, Mary's Green and in the village hall organized by the Fete Committee- a leaflet with the details had been delivered to most households. The details of events were given out. Sunday 12th June in the afternoon Tinies Teddy Bears Picnic and Children's Tea Party . To follow later a barbeque and hog roast with a licensed bar. Fete Committee raises funds to help small groups in the village. CARM, the cricket club, the film club and Rolvenden Reserves had benefited from the Fete Committee Fund.

Judy Vinson: had responded to the KCC's consultation about the Mobile Library Service
The service offered to housebound residents was for books to be ordered online with a 'Library Friend' to deliver or obtain books. Miss Vinson suggested the service be extended to the Library Van. The Library Service considered this a good idea although it would have to be done county-wide not just locally. However, she may be looking for volunteers to become 'library friends' to order books online and collect from the Library Van.

(b) There are interviews in May for a new vicar for Rolvenden and by Christmas time Rolvenden will have a new vicar.

Sunday 12th June, there will be a special service in the church for the Queens' Birthday

Friends of St. Mary's report by Mr Fred May: The group started in May 2014 with the aim to assist financially to keep the fabric of the church building for the current and future use of all the parishioners. The group keep the money raised and fund the required work or repairs not covered by the Diocese. There are plans in the church for repairs to the clock.

There were 2 events held last year and there will be two this year, for the Birthday Weekend a brass Band concert in the church Saturday 11th June and the flower festival in August .

Mr May was sure residents would not like to see the church as a derelict as in other villages and asked residents to support to the planned events.

Rolvenden Early Settlement Group: This village organization has been started on the back of Sue Sagers work in May 2014 when a geophysical survey of the Halden Place Site and an initial landscape assessment was carried out. This clearly established that there is surviving archaeology below ground, almost certainly relating to the medieval and Tudor site. This organization will move this to phase 2.

Title of the Project - Halden Place Early Settlement Research Project; the plan is to arrange a professional dig with engagement of local groups and people to clearly understand its history and document it for future generations. The group is currently applying for a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Information as to the progress of things will be in the parish magazine or Rolvenden Update.

All of the above is with the kind permission of the Barham family.

Mr Bryant: the meeting learned that Rolvenden Football club's last match of the season would be at the weekend and a win would generate promotion for the team. Tim Sims was congratulated on the number of goals scored in the season. The amount of work done by Karen Adams, secretary of the Football Club was much appreciated

John and Jenny field were thanked for providing facilities for the football club. Hole Park Estate were thanked. Lyn and Jenny were thanked for the best hospitality in the League.

Rolvenden Cricket Club: The Seniors have stayed at the top of the division to the end of the season, won the division and have been promoted receiving a large cup

Nick Stickles took the most wickets over the league season and received a personal award. The under 15's came just missed out winning their division and the under 13's finished a commendable mid order placing. Friendly cricket was also played and enjoyed and cricketers of all abilities are welcome.

Residents of Dingleton: expressed their concerns about a planning application for an agricultural change of use for the land at a neighbouring farm. This Farm was advertising an 'Open Day' for a wedding venue at the same location as the agricultural change of use. Concerns were expressed about the amount of traffic that would be generated down single width lanes that had dangerous exits onto main roads.

Young Person: the request was for a balance ball to be sited in the childrens' play area

The Chairman ended the meeting at 8.50pm and invited everyone to stay for refreshments.

Signed----- date-----