



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 15th December 2020.

It was observed that there was poor internet connections and sound interference affecting the ability for all councillors to completely follow the proceedings.

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, Cllr Mrs T Turner and Cllr Mrs L Walker

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

Also present: Ashford Borough Council ward member K Walder and 1 resident for the highways item.

482. **Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies for absence.

483. **Declarations of Interest:**

a. **Declarations of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

Cllr E Barham declared an interest in minute 486a planning application for Maytham Farmhouse as a neighbour.

Cllr S Bryant declared an interest in minute 486h planning application for Cullens Farm Buildings as a contractor.

b. **Declarations of Members' Other Significant Interests:**

Cllr Mrs D Curtain, trustee of War Memorial Trust

Cllr E Barham trustee of Basil Russel Trust, trustee of the Windmill Trust, Royal British Legion.

Cllr Mrs I Newman, trustee of War Memorial Trust, trustee of the Non-Ecclesiastical Charities.

c. **Declarations of Members' Other Interests:**

Cllr G Tiltman, member of the Village Hall Management committee

Cllr L Walker Rolvenden Village Fete, Secretary Rolvenden Football Club

Cllr S Bryant, Chairman Rolvenden Football Club.

484. **Minutes:**

The minutes of the virtual meeting held on 17th November 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.

485. **Highways Matters:**

The Parish Council has received a request for the consideration of the construction of a pedestrian footpath along the B2086 from Sandhurst Lane to Rolvenden Windmill. Kent Highways have been contacted for guidance as the local Highway Authority. At the present time funding is being restricted to those schemes aimed at reducing casualties on the road.

Schemes can be taken forward subject to the Parish Council arranging the necessary funding. A basic path is costed at £95 per linear metre should the land be owned by highways and level given the distance this would equate to approximately £38,000 and no other works such as drainage or fencing be required.

Councillor Barham stated that the footpath could be constructed on his land subject to a fence and bark surface being installed and enquired if S106 monies could be utilised for this.

The Parish Clerk was asked to check with the Borough Council regarding this,

Prior to the Coronavirus Pandemic the Parish Council were looking at various schemes with Kent Highways which requires initial public consultation, originally planned to take place at the Annual Parish Meeting which was cancelled. It has become clear from discussion with Kent Highways that not only do the Parish Council need the support of residents they need also to raise the finance for the project.

Indicative costs, which are subject to survey and potential additional costs, for some of the schemes suggested are:

20 mph zone £11,000 (would require traffic calming measures not normally granted on A roads)

Enhanced school road markings £1,500 (estimated life 12 months)

Pedestrian crossing £17,000 light controlled £38,000 (additional street lighting would be required which will increase the costs considerably)

Parking restrictions on Regent Street £3,500 plus cost of lines.

The Parish Council is asked to consider the funding of an automated traffic count on the High Street for a one week period in order to ascertain the flow of traffic as well as the speed of traffic passing. The survey will help formulate a way forward as well as providing documentary evidence that will be required by Kent Highways as there is no evidence of crashes occurring.

No decisions were made as Councillor Curtain and Borough Councillor Walder are due to meet with Kent Highways in January, therefore the matter will be deferred until that meeting has taken place.

486. **Planning Matters:**

- a. **20/1574/AS & 20/1575/AS Maytham Farmhouse, Maytham Road, Rolvenden –** Installation of replacement roof covering and conservation roof lights to the existing outbuilding with associated Listed Building application 20/1575/AS Installation of replacement roof covering and conservation roof lights to the existing outbuilding.

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application.

- b. **20/01653/AS Oak View, Hastings Road, Rolvenden –** The construction of a 1.8m high close board fencing inside the existing post and rail fence and planting of triple staggered native hedging.

Resolved: The Parish Council has no objection to the application subject to the requirements relating to the Public Right of Way being implemented.

- c. **20/01650/AS & 20/01651/AS 71 High Street, Rolvenden** – Change to external facing materials, addition of front door, French doors and addition of rooflights. Addition of walls & doors at ground & first floor level, replacement windows, bricking up of existing doorway, internal repairs.

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application.

- d. **20/01662/AS Oak View, Hastings Road, Rolvenden** – Construction of a new barn building and associated hardstanding and access for the provision of 3 no. stables, tack room, tractor store and hay barn.

Resolved: The proposed application breaches the SPD on the following points and therefore should be refused;

1. **There is insufficient grazing for the three horses allowed for by the stabling - in fact, there is barely adequate grazing for one and Paragraph 2.6 of the SPD states as follows, 'The Council is unlikely to grant permission for stables if insufficient grazing is available', as overgrazing is both an animal welfare issue as well as being harmful to the landscape. The site sits firmly within the High Weald AONB so the landscape has the highest levels of protection nationally and at local level through the ABC Local Plan and the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan. A condition to restrict numbers of animals kept at this site would raise serious animal welfare issues as it can only just support one horse, applying the British Horse Society's formula (which is explicitly applied by the SPD). Animal welfare informs the provisions of the SPD explicitly on this point of insufficient grazing and it is well-established that horses should not be kept on their own or spend excessive times in stables. They are herd animals and suffer severe mental stress if solitary or kept inside for extensive periods.**
2. **The application is completely silent on the issue of manure and muck-heap sites - no muck-heap is provided for. Paragraph 3.6 of the SPD requires applicants to provide a statement of the proposed arrangements for the disposal of stable manure.**
3. **The application is also completely silent on the issue of liquid waste and consequent pollution risk - again, in breach of the requirements of the SPD. There are no details how liquid waste resulting from hay soaking, stable and yard washing, horse washing and manure run-off will be dealt with and its polluting impact mitigated.**

The drawings show that this would appear to be a barn adapted to become a stable. It would appear from the drawings that there is no opening of sufficient size for animals to access the Loose boxes. There appears to be no ventilation or natural light any animals housed in these conditions will suffer horribly.

The planning statement makes no mention of the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan which is a material consideration for any planning application in the Parish in particular policy RNP3.

Paragraph 3.1.4 of the statement appears to be irrelevant to the application as there would be insufficient space for this level of storage.

Paragraph 5.5.4 quotes that this is a replacement building which is incorrect as there is no building at the intended location of the barn nor is it in the location of the kennels removed prior to this application.

- e. **20/01666/AS Lowden Barn, Lowden Farm, Maytham Road, Rolvenden** – Regularisation of use of the building as ancillary annexe with internal works.

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application subject to a condition on grant that the annexe is to remain so in perpetuity.

- f. **20/01697/AS 10 Gatefield Cottages, Tenterden Road, Rolvenden** – Proposed two storey rear extension with material alterations to existing building.

The Parish Council were unable to come to a decision due to the lack of information included within the application.

- g. **20/1701/AS Lower Woolwich, Mounts Lane, Rolvenden** – Pool pavilion including eating and changing area.

Resolved: The Parish Council supports the application.

- h. **20/01552/AS Cullens Farm Buildings, Maytham Road** – Demolition of existing buildings and erection of a detached three bedroom dwelling with associated parking and amenity.

Resolved: The Parish Council is not submitting a comment.

487. Bollards on the High Street:

A quotation has been received for the installation of timber bollards to protect the verge from the Church entrance along to Monypenny in the sum of £2,376.00 this price is subject to:

1. The use of mechanical equipment, where services are present within close proximity to the excavation area, hand digging will need to be agreed and the cost of this will be charged as an extra over the quoted sum.
2. Subject to the Parish Council obtaining permission from Kent Highways for the installation.
3. Subject to site survey and service maps being obtained by the Parish Council from utility companies.
4. Subject to availability of plant and materials.

The Parish Council is asked to determine if it wishes to proceed with the project, if the decision is to proceed to request the Parish Clerk to liaise with Kent Highways for approval and to obtain the necessary utility plans.

Resolved: not to proceed with the quotation but to purchase posts locally and arrange installation.

488. Merrington Park:

Councillor Barham reported that he had made contact with the owner who is considering cleaning out the tanks and will not be averse to opening the grounds to small groups to see them.

489. S106 funds and projects:

The funds from the second phase of Halden Field have only just been received by the Borough Council. They will now progress the request for the release of funds and issue the legal agreement in due course. In view of the delays the play company have been contacted to verify if the prices quoted are still valid.

490. **Finance:**
Schedule of payments:
Staff costs £869.42
Litter picking £120.00
Rolvenden Village Hall £861.55
Tompsett Landscaping £690.00 (VAT £115.00)
Care Bear scheme £ £300.00

Funds received in November:
Care Bear Scheme £195.00
ABC grant for defibrillator cabinet £450,00

Councillors Mrs Curtain and Mrs Newman verified the bank transactions.

Resolved:

1. **To authorise the payment of the invoices presented at the meeting.**
2. **To receive and note Report RPC/20/09.**
3. **To receive and acknowledge the financial movements fro the period 1st April 2020 to 30th November 2020.**

491. **Budget 2021 / 2022:**
Report RPC/20/10 brings to the Parish Council proposals for the year 2021 / 2022.

The report contained 3 options for councillors to consider. Councillor Barham proposed a further option of reducing the Band D equivalent by 3p a week in addition to removing the £10,000 item for Highways improvements. This proposal was duly seconded.

Resolved:

1. **To receive and note Report RPC/20/10.**
2. **To determine the Parish Council's budget for 2021/2022 as detailed below.**
3. **To confirm the Precept for 2021 / 2022 in accordance with the provisions in Sections 39, 41 and 50 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.**
4. **To authorise the Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer of the Parish Council to sign the Precept demand on Ashford Borough Council.**

Budgeted payments	
Audit	600.00
Bank Charges	72.00
Contingency	6,374.00
Donations	100.00
Grounds maintenance	11,000.00
Insurance	1,700.00
Meetings	200.00
phone boxes	150.00
Postage	50.00
Staff costs	11,000.00
Stationery	500.00
Subscriptions	900.00
Training	400.00
Total	33,046.00
Budgeted receipts	
Churchyard maintenance	2,320.00
precept	30,486.00
war memorial maintenance	240.00
Total	33,046.00

492. **Stolen funds:**

A letter has been received from the insurance company in respect of the claim made in respect of the stolen funds. The response is that they will not honour the claim as in their opinion the requirement for bank reconciliation statements had not been met as nothing was minuted. Bank reconciliations were undertaken after the meetings had closed and the documentation retained by the Parish Clerk, none of which was returned following his dismissal, thereby leaving the council with no evidence to show that the necessary reconciliation took place..

Discussion was held about the Council appointing a working group to take over the recovery of the said funds if they have not been recovered by 31 January 2021. Councillor Barham proposed that members of the previous council had an interest in the matter and should therefore be excluded from the vote.

In view of the disagreement and disruptions the Chairman postponed the vote to allow the Clerk to seek legal guidance regarding Councillor interests.

493. **Other items for information:**

Councillor Barham reported that officers from Ashford Borough Council had visited looking for land to be nominated for traveller sites.

Councillor Bryant raised the issue of trees on Maytham Road which had been partially cut back, this is to be placed on the next Parish Council agenda.

Councillor Mrs Walker advised that the Christmas hampers were being made up as part of the Care Bear scheme.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9.20 pm.