

PLAXTOL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Plaxtol Memorial Hall on Monday 7 January 2019 at 8.00pm

Present: Cllrs P Thomas (Chairman), M Brewin, J Cannon, M Carboni, R Simpson; L Thomas (Clerk); 3 members of the public

Apologies: Cllrs J Denham, K Johnson; Boro Cllrs S Perry, T Shaw, M Taylor

1. Matters raised by the public / Borough Councillors

Three members of the public were present to observe the meeting process, as each had expressed a interest in possibly serving on the Council. The Chairman welcomed them to the meeting and advised that he would explain processes as the meeting progressed.

2. Declarations of interest

None.

3. Minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 3 December 2018 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. Matters arising

None.

5. Council Matters

The Chairman advised that there had been a good response to a call for expressions of interest in becoming a Councillor which he had put out on Facebook. An event had been arranged for 8 February at the Memorial Hall for interested parties to meet Councillors and learn more about the Council's work. The timing for co-option could be an issue with elections due in May 2019 but the issue would be re-visited when all firm expressions of interest were known.

6. Correspondence

KCC

Highways: Community Transport Scheme, extension of deadline; monthly bus updates, December 2018.

TMBC

Area 2 Planning Committee: meeting papers, 12.12.18

Other

Action with Communities in Rural Kent: Inside Track, Issue 256.

Campaign to Protect Rural England: campaigns updates; newsletters 22-27 December 2018; Women & the Countryside event, 6.2.19.

KALC: NALC bulletins on national developments 30.11.18-7.1.19; NALC newsletter, 21.11.18; NALC Spring Conference, 11.2.19; KCC Brexit Preparedness; Kent Police, Rural Matters, Winter 2018; Kent Police Rural Liaison Team report, November 2018; Counter Terrorism Policing bulletins, 12-18 December 2018; KALC News, December 2018; Kent Police & Crime Commissioner newsletter, December 2018; winter training events, 2019.

Kent Men of the Trees: Arbor, Winter 2018.

Kent Wildlife Trust: newsletters 12-21 December 2018.

Kent Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance Trust: letter of thanks for donation.

Tonbridge Philharmonic Society: letter of thanks for donation.

E-watch nos 1610-1616.

7. Payments/Finance

- i) Councillors approved the nationally agreed salary scales with a pay award in respect of the Clerk's salary effective from 1 April 2019.
- ii) Councillors received an updated budget for 2019/2020. Since the last meeting notification had been received of the tax base calculation and it was confirmed that there was to be no extension on referendum principles to Parish Councils for the coming year. Cllr Simpson highlighted changes in expenditure on the Clerk's salary, possible election expenses for 2019, fence repairs, highways, the completion of the Spoute playground project, increased energy costs and the street light replacement programme. In order to meet expenditure and retain a healthy reserve a 10% increase in precept was being recommended. The impact of a 10% increase would be an annual increase of £4.06 for a Band A property, £4.73 for a Band B property and £6.09 for a Band D property. The Chairman proposed adoption of a budget of £53,788 with a 10% increase in precept resulting in projected income of £42,172 with a deficit of expenditure over income of £11,616. This was seconded by Cllr Brewin and unanimously agreed by those present.
- iii) Councillors considered requests for funding from the Samaritans and from the Counselling Centre, Tunbridge Wells who had confirmed that their services were used by local residents. Donations of £100 for each were approved.
- iv) Receipts & payments. A financial statement and bank reconciliation was distributed to members.

The following receipts were noted:

	£
Plaxtol Playtime: donation to Spoute climbing frame	600.00
Fairlawne Estate: donation to Spoute climbing frame	1,000.00

The following payments were approved:

	£
Mark Harrod Ltd: football net supports	97.20
Streetlights: ivy clearance from bracket lights	126.00
PPCC: Herald donation	1,000.00
Victim Support: donation	150.00
PPCC: pastoral care donation	250.00
Age Concern, Malling: donation	150.00
Lost Words, Kent: donation	10.00
National Allotment Society: annual subscription	66.00
Commercial Services: grounds maintenance	824.77
Clerk salary & reimbursements, December 2018	659.31
Eon Energy: street lighting December 2018	102.86

8. Planning

TMBC decisions

Brookfields, Long Mill Lane TM/18/02647/FL

Proposed two & single storey extensions. **Granted permission.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Golding Orchard, The Street TM/18/02657/TNCA

Silver Birch T1 to be reduced by 3 metres on top and to left hand side to rebalance the tree. **No objection.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Little Mead, Roughway Lane TM/18/02686/FL

Replacement dwelling. **Granted permission.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Lower Dux Cottage, Dux Lane TM/18/02486/FL

First floor rear extension and creation of pitched roof above garage. **Granted permission.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Ringlestone, The Street TM/18/02470/FL

Erection of three detached dwellings with associated parking, landscaping and amenity. **Refused.** Parish Council had **objected** to this application.

Parish council decisions

The Coach House, Paxton Farm, Tonbridge Road TM/18/02887/FL

Erection of two storey extension to east side and refurbishment of property. **No objection.**

Ivy Cottage, Roughway Lane TM/18/02945/FL

Single storey rear extension. **No objection.**

9. Recreation Grounds

i) Councillors received an update on the Spoute climbing frame from the project organisers. It was noted that funding had now reached the £18.5k mark and, as the Eibe climbing frame which the project had originally set out to acquire was now discontinued, views on other possible designs had been sought from residents. Quotes were also being sought from alternative providers. Cllr Carboni advised that he and Cllr Denham would set up a meeting with the organisers to finalise ordering and management of the installation.

Action:
Cllrs
Carboni,
Denham

ii) It was reported that an email had been received from a resident concerned about the use of the Spoute Recreation Ground for dog walking. The resident had suggested that a pictorial sign might help support the existing prohibition on dogs in the recreation grounds. Cllr Carboni will pursue this suggestion.

Action:
Cllr
Carboni

10. Basted Mill Public Open Space

Cllr Simpson presented a report to consider the Parish's continued membership of the BMPOS management committee. He advised that the open space land had been acquired by TMBC in 1999 and a management committee set up consisting of representatives from Platt, Plaxtol and Borough Green Parish Councils and from TMBC. The land was available for the enjoyment of all members of the public and included interesting flora and fauna. The overall look and appearance of the land was good. On the financial side, Cllr Simpson reported that the committee had been functioning well under its current Chair, that the cost to the Parish for membership of the committee was minimal and that the committee was well funded by the membership for normal maintenance. However, there were several risks facing the site which could have a major impact on Parish finances. These included costly events such as: the replacement of the damaged wall in Mill Lane at a cost of £4k, for which the committee was liable; the fault in the weir, currently accepted as a Crest Nicholson liability but which was still under negotiation; extensive ash die-back resulting in more tree work than normal. There was also a threat that TMBC could withdraw its funding in line with its other land disposal. Cllr Simpson advised that the current form of funding, annual donation, does not operate in line with the constitution, which states that expenses will be underwritten by the membership. This agreement could constitute a serious financial risk and he suggested that the Parish Council needed to consider whether or not to remain a constituent member of the management committee. He advised that all views would be welcome and requested that Councillors consider their view for the March meeting when he would be seeking a decision regarding continued membership.

Action:
all Cllrs

11. Highways & Transport

i) JPCTCG 26.11.18. The Chairman advised that the November meeting of JPCTCG had considered the following issues:

- consultation on the Lower Thames crossing, due to open in 2017, and the impact of the proposals on roads to the south west;

- roadworks and delays resulting from the M20 smart motorway upgrade;
 - continued issues with HGVs and lorry parking;
 - bus update including cuts to the 404 service and the introduction of the Sevenoaks taxi-bus service pilot.
- ii) The Chairman reported that the bus consultation had confirmed cuts to the 404 service, but that the school buses on this route would be maintained. Plaxtol and the surrounding parishes had registered their objections to the proposal.
- iii) It was reported that, in response to an enquiry from the Parish Council, Kent Highways had confirmed that they would not be considering traffic calming measures on Church Hill as it was not a priority site.

12. Any Other Business

- i) Councillors were advised that the website is currently unavailable due to changes at the host server. The designer would be prioritising the new website design to replace the now redundant site with a view to getting the site operational again by the end of the month.
- ii) It was noted that a comment had been received via Facebook questioning the safety of the swings at the Spoute Recreation Ground. Cllr Carboni agreed to investigate.
[NB: since the meeting the annual playground safety inspection has taken place.]

13. Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 4 February 2019 at 8 pm

The meeting closed at 9.45pm