

PLAXTOL PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of meeting held in Plaxtol School on Monday 9 January 2017 at 8.00pm

Present: Cllrs P Thomas (Chairman), M Anketell, M Brewin, J Cannon, D Fermor, R Simpson; L Thomas (Clerk); 2 members of the public

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

1. **Matters raised by the public / Borough Councillors**

Two members of the public were present to object to planning application TM/16/03769/FL, Dalecroft, Yopps Green. They outlined their concerns as follows:

- the size of the proposed development adjacent to a conservation area;
- the increase in size and volume in relation to the existing property;
- the proposal not being in keeping with the environment or with the surrounding properties;
- solar panels visible from road and countryside;
- the long line of windows facing to the neighbouring oast property;
- increased ridge height;
- the practical difficulties of construction and consequent impact on neighbours and on the highway;

They advised that they had no objection in principle to an increased dwelling catering for the family's needs, but that the proposal as it stood was oversized.

The Chairman thanked them for their contribution.

2. **Declarations of interest**

In the interests of transparency, Cllrs Anketell and Simpson declared an interest in planning application TM/16/03769/FL, Dalecroft, Yopps Green as nearby residents. There is no DPI or Other Significant Interest in either case and neither Councillor had received notification from TMBC as part of the neighbour consultation process.

3. **Minutes of last meeting**

The minutes of the meeting of 5 December 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

4. **Matters arising**

None.

5. **Planning – Dalecroft**

This item was moved up the agenda for the benefit of the members of the public present.

Dalecroft, Yopps Green TM/16/03769/FL

Demolition of existing bungalow and replacement with single family dwelling house. The Parish Council **objects** to the application on the grounds of overdevelopment with no special case for the materially larger building proposed in Green Belt land, and the design and appearance of the building which is inconsistent with its surroundings and with neighbouring properties within an AONB. Should the proposal go ahead, solar panels should be located out of view at ground level.

6. Correspondence

KCC

Highways: monthly bus updates.

Kent Minerals & Waste site plans, call for sites.

TMBC

Community Safety Partnership: Newsletter, Jan/Feb 2017.

Other

Communicorp: Clerks & Councils Direct.

Gatwick Airport: revised Noise Complaints Handling Policy 2016;

Gatwick Airmail, December 2016.

KALC: NALC bulletins on national developments, 2.1.16-16.12.16;

Country Eye App; template Training & Development Policy/Plan;

Parish News, December 2016; Meeting papers, AGM, Area

Meeting 12.1.17; Community Awards Scheme 2017; WW1 100th anniversary celebrations, November 2018. Councillors agreed to register for a celebration beacon.

Kent Men of the Trees: Arbor 2016.

Kent Police: campaign to fight modern slavery; rural weekly report, 9.12.16.

KSS Air Ambulance: letter of thanks for donation.

NALC: Local Council Review.

Porchlight: letter of thanks for donation.

Relate: letter of thanks for donation.

Royal British Legion: letter of thanks for donation.

T&M Green Party: response to Local Plan.

E-watch nos 1404-1410.

7. Payments/Finance

i) Councillors received an amended draft budget for 2017/18. Cllr Simpson advised that since the last meeting notification had been received of the tax base calculation, which had been factored into the budget, and it was confirmed that DCLG had announced that referendum principles on local tax increases were not being extended to Parish Councils for 2017/18. Council payments to other organisations and under Section 137 had also been reviewed since the December meeting, as a result of which it was proposed that the regular annual donations of £1,000 each to the Memorial Hall and the Betenson Trust should be discontinued from 2017/18. The Chair of the Memorial Hall Committee had agreed that the Hall's finances were robust and was aware of the proposal to withdraw regular funding. The Chairman acknowledged that the Memorial Hall played a vital part in the life of the Parish and that unlike many

parishes, Plaxtol was very fortunate in not having to finance its village hall. Cllr Simpson had spoken to representatives of the Betenson Trust who had confirmed that Plaxtol was the only parish to make regular donations to its funds and that its finances were also robust. Both organisations had been advised that the Parish Council would give sympathetic consideration to any request for funding for a specific purpose in the future. A resultant budget of £41,614 was being proposed. Councillors were reminded that funding from TMBC would be discontinued in 2017/18 and that whilst this would produce a saving in Council Tax for parishioners, it would require an increase in precept to make up the shortfall in Parish Council income. A 25% increase in precept would preserve the status quo for the tax payer, but this would result in inadequate Parish Council reserves against the proposed budget. It was proposed that in order to maintain a healthy reserve, an increase of 55% be approved. When adjusted for the impact of the withdrawal of TMBC funding, the real terms impact of a 55% increase in precept would be an annual increase in payment of £7.64 for a Band A property, £8.92 for a Band B property and £11.47 for a Band D property.

Cllr Simpson proposed adoption of a budget of £41,614, with a 55% increase to the precept resulting in projected income of £38,373 with a deficit of expenditure over income of £3,241. This was seconded by Cllr Brewin and unanimously agreed.

- ii) Councillors considered a request for funding from the Counselling Centre in Tunbridge Wells, but agreed not to make a financial contribution. A request from Plaxtol Primary School for a donation of £200 to pay for the cutting of the hedge bordering School Lane at the beginning of the school year was approved.
- iii) A financial statement and bank reconciliation was distributed to members.

The following payments were approved:

	£
P P Broad: hedge cutting	174.00
PPCC: Herald donation	1,000.00
T&M Citizens Advice Bureau: donation	250.00
Age Concern: donation	150.00
P Clark Tree Services: tree maintenance GML	96.00
PSR Lighting: street light repairs	333.06
JPCTCG membership 2016-17	50.00
Memorial Hall hire Oct-Dec 2016	57.00
Clerk salary & re-imbursements December 2016	797.05
Eon Energy: street lighting December 2016	82.75

8. Planning

- i) The Chairman reported that TMBC had advised that Parish Councils would no longer be permitted to attend Planning Committee site inspections, although applicants and agents would continue to be allowed to attend. It was felt that this was a detrimental move which privileged developers above local concerns. Boro Cllr Taylor was pursuing this issue with TMBC and it would also be raised at KALC and PPP by the parishes.
- ii) Cllr Simpson reported that an application had now been received from H&H Celcon for the western extension to its works. An initial

response had been made by Borough Green which was supporting the application in principle, provided safeguards were put in place.

iii) Planning applications

It was noted that the appeal made against TMBC's refusal to grant planning permission in respect of planning application TM/16/01784/FL, Caterways Cottage, Old Soar Road, had been dismissed.

TMBC decisions

1 Sheet Hill Farm Cottages, Winfield Lane TM/16/03021/FL

Conversion of cellar, installation of log burner flue, alterations to fenestration, installation of new oil tank to the rear and reduction of ground level to the rear. **Granted permission.** Parish Council had not objected to this application.

Parish council decisions

Cherry Orchard, Long Mill Lane TM/16/03772/PDVAR

Prior Notification: Change of use of an agricultural building to a dwellinghouse (Part 3, Class Q(a)) and associated building operations (Part 3, Class Q(b)). The Council has **no objection** to a dwelling at this site, the technical details of the change of use to be decided by the Planning Officer.

Spring Cottage, Long Mill Lane TM/16/03731/FL

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

9. Parish Plan & Associated Issues

i) The Chairman reported that it was understood that the landlord of the Papermakers Arms was in the process of making a bid to Enterprise Inn for the purchase of the pub. The community group had agreed not to bid against the landlord and the outcome of his bid was awaited. Should it be unsuccessful, the community bid would go ahead and for this eventuality a meeting had been arranged for 30 January for potential investors to consider the proposed pub company's constitution.

It was reported that the former butcher's shop was in the process of being refurbished.

ii) The Chairman advised that Nat West Bank had given notice of its intention to close its branch in Borough Green. Borough Green Parish Council was raising objections to this closure which the local parishes were supporting.

10. Meeting Feedback

Cllr Carboni had attended a meeting of CPRE on 15.12.16. The meeting had addressed the issues of planning site visits and the closure of Nat West at Borough Green, as outlined above.

11. Community Safety

Cllrs Cannon and Fermor advised that the Volunteer Community Support Warden scheme could be of benefit to the parish. A support warden could provide a uniformed presence and would liaise with police. Councillors noted that the scheme would have an ongoing budget cost and that a volunteer would be expected to be available for five hours a week. It was agreed that Cllrs Cannon and Fermor would seek expressions of interest in volunteering being found, and the possibility of sharing a volunteer with another parish.

Action:
Cllrs
Cannon,
Fermor

12. Recreation Grounds

This item was held over to the next meeting.

13. Highways & Transport

Two scheduled road closures were reported:

- Dunks Green road on 30.1.17 for one day for BT installation;
- The Street on 13.2.17 for seven days for repairs to the road to be effected by Gigaclear.

14. Any Other Business

None.

15. Date of Next Meeting:

Monday 6 February 2017 at 8 pm in the Memorial Hall.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.