



Rolvenden Parish Council

Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held in St Mary the Virgin Church, Rolvenden on 26th March 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr E Barham, Cllr Mrs C Bell, Cllr N Bell, Cllr S Bryant. Cllr A Pickering and Cllr J Shilton.

In attendance Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk

Also present approx. 60 residents.

Councillor Barham acted as Chairman for minutes 999 to 1002 inclusive.

999. **Current status of the Parish Council:**

Following the resignation of two councillors after the January meeting of the Parish Council only two remained which resulted in the Council becoming inquorate and unable to meet and make decisions as by statute there must be three councillors present.

Ashford Borough Council as Returning Officer for all elections were contacted for guidance. Under the terms of Section 91 of the Local Government Act 1972 a proposal was put to the full Borough Council to approve the appointment of Borough Councillors to temporarily fill seats until such time as residents are co-opted to the Parish Council.

The Order, copy attached, appoints 4 Borough Councillors to act as Rolvenden Parish Councillors until such time as 4 new Parish Councillors are co-opted and take up office.

1000. **Apologies for absence:**

There were no apologies for absence.

1001. **Declarations of Interest:**

- a. **Disclosable Interests:** Under the Localism Act 2011 to be made relating to items on the agenda.

None.

- b. **Other Significant Interests:** Under the code of conduct adopted in May 2021 by the Parish Council, to be made relating to items on this agenda.

Cllr E Barham trustee of Basil Russel Trust, trustee of the Windmill Trust, Royal British Legion,
Cllr S Bryant, Rolvenden War Memorial Charity

- c. **Other Interests:** not required to be disclosed under (a) and (b) but voluntary announcements made only for transparency reasons.

1002. **Minutes:**

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 19th January 2024 were submitted, agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

1003. **Chairman:**

It was resolved at the January meeting before the Council became inquorate that the Chairmanship would rotate on a monthly basis between the four members alphabetically until the Annual Parish Council meeting in May.

The Parish Council is asked if it wishes to review this decision as only two of the four elected councillors remain.

Resolved: to appoint Councillor Mrs C Bell as Chair for this meeting.

1004. **Co-option of councillors:**

Following receipt of confirmation from Ashford Borough Council that residents had not requested a by election notices were posted onto the village noticeboards and the Parish Council website inviting residents to apply for the positions and asking that they filled in a questionnaire which would provide some background information to allow councillors to consider those applying.

Four applications have been received in respect of the seven vacancies and their submitted questionnaires have been shared with the existing councillors. Those applicants have been invited to attend the meeting.

Resolved: to Co-opt C Balch, M Gilchrist, J Green and A Hinge as Parish Councillors, declaration of acceptance of office completed.

1005. **Public participation:**

A question was asked regarding the previous resignations, the Chair stated that previous events would not be discussed.

There were questions asked regarding the call for sites covered later in the agenda.

The subject of the level of vandalism and crime was raised and the lack of police presence.

A question was asked if training was available for councillors.

A question was raised regarding Multi Use Sports area, this will be put to the Council at a future meeting.

1006. **Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:**

Councillor Walder said that much of her work in the Parish is centred around crime and the new waste contract. Part of the issue with the level of crime is that people are afraid to report it, it can be done anonymously through Crimestoppers in addition Cllr Walder said she would be present at the Farmer's Market if residents want to tell her.

1007. **Planning:**

Planning application PA/2024/0278 – 34 Maytham Road, Rolvenden – Demolition of bay window and rear extension and erection of replacement single storey side/rear extension.

Resolved: to support the application.

Planning application PA/2024/0281 – Listed Building Consent 34 Maytham Road, Rolvenden – Demolition of bay window and rear extension, removal of existing crittal window,

erection of replacement single storey side/rear extension, reinstatement of historic framing, new sash windows to front elevation, chimney repointing.

Resolved: to support the application.

Planning application PA/2024/0400 – Forsham Farm, Wassall Lane, Rolvenden – Remedial works to address subsidence damage to the sub-structure and structure. Concrete underpinning to be completed along with associated internal works.

Resolved: to not comment on the application.

Planning application PA/2024/0495 – Land adjacent to Alders Fruit Farm, Alder Lane, Rolvenden – Erection of an agricultural barn.

Resolved: The Parish Council object to the application on the grounds that the site is within the High Weald AONB and the site is not an agricultural holding.

Councillor Barham left the meeting.

1008. **Ashford Local Plan 2041 – Call for Sites:**

The Call for Sites was undertaken by Ashford Borough Council between September and December 2023.

At this stage a list of submitted sites has been published for information purposes only, no assessments have been undertaken and no decisions have been made on any of the sites submitted.

The process of assessment is undertaken via a Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

The HELAA is a technical assessment that is prepared by the Local Planning Authority (Ashford Borough Council) after the Call for Sites and forms an important part of the evidence base supporting a new Ashford Local Plan 2041. It provides a clear and up-to-date picture of land availability across the Borough, and assesses each site's suitability, availability, and achievability for their proposed land uses.

The HELAA does not:

- Represent policy
- Determine whether a site should be allocated for future development
- Determine whether planning permission should be granted

When the site assessment process has been completed, the Borough Council will work and consult with local communities to consider how sites which have passed through their HELAA process, fit with the preferred spatial strategy to accommodate future planned growth in the borough to 2041.

The sites in Rolvenden submitted for consideration are:

- Land adjacent to Redwood, Tenterden Road
- Land to the South of Sparkeswood Avenue
- Windmill Farm, Benenden Road
- Land adjoining Dawsons, Benenden Road
- Inkerman Field, Land South of Benenden Road, Cornex Garage
- Former Vicarage and Monypenny
- The Rolvenden Club, Maytham Road

Councillor Barham returned to the meeting.

1009. Litter Picking:

The event was a great success the costs incurred in dealing with the arisings came to £195, £100 to be covered by the Borough Councillor Ward Member grant.

1010. Finance:

Report RPC/23/19 brings to the Parish Council a summary of the receipts and payments together with bank reconciliation and funds statement. It should be noted that only minimal payments have passed through the Parish Council's bank account, these being direct debit payments. Other payments have been made by Ashford Borough Council on the Parish Council's behalf as no councillor signatories remain.

Payments made by Ashford Borough Council on behalf of the Parish Council:

January:

Staff costs £1,455.65
Litter picking £150.00
KPC Maintenance £11,400.00
KPC Maintenance £11,400.00

February:

Staff costs £1,000.45
Litter picking £120.00
KPC Maintenance £9,000.00

Schedule of payments:

Staff costs £876.69
Litter picking £120.00

Resolved:

- 1. To receive and note report RPC/23/19**
- 2. To receive and acknowledge the financial movements for the period 1st April 2023 to 29th February 2024**
- 3. To acknowledge the payments made by Ashford Borough Council on behalf of the Parish Council**
- 4. To request Ashford Borough Council to pay the items in the schedule of payments included in this report.**

1011. Bank account:

At the present time there are no councillors that are signatories to the Parish Council Bank Account. The current mandate requires three signatures on all cheques and three authorisations on electronic payments.

Members are asked to nominate a minimum of three councillors to act as signatories.

Resolved: to nominate councillors Balch, Gilchrist, Green and Hinge as signatories to the bank account.

Councillor Barham left the meeting.

1012. Request for the release of S106 funds:

A request has been received from the football club for the release of £5,350.00 from the S106 funds for the purchase of a toilet block and associated effluent tank. It has been stated that this unit, a metal container, will be a replacement for the unit destroyed in the fire.

Councillor Barham returned to the meeting.

1013. Representation on Outside Bodies:

The Parish Council is asked to nominate two members to attend meetings of the Ashford Kent Association of Local Councils Committee.

The Parish Council is the sole corporate trustee of the Thoburn Land Trust, the meetings and the finances of the Charity are to be recorded and maintained separately from the Parish Council. Failure to do so will result in a failure of the internal audit.

Resolved: to defer the matters to the next meeting of the Parish Council.

1014. Meeting Dates:

The Parish Council is asked to determine the date for meetings for April and May as well as venue. Whilst the Village Hall is the preferred venue for meetings it is not always available, however St Mary the Virgin Church are prepared to host the meeting at a cost of £50 per meeting.

Resolved: to hold the next Parish Council meeting on 16th April 2024 in St Mary The Virgin Church.

1015. Annual Parish Meeting:

The Parish Council is asked to determine the date for the Annual Parish Meeting which by law has to be held before 1st June. At the time of preparing the agenda the Village Hall is available on the following dates: 25th April, 16th May, 23rd May and 30th May.

Resolved: to hold the Annual Parish meeting on 25th April 2024.

Post meeting note: all the dates previously available at the Village Hall have subsequently been booked, although the Gallery was available but no disabled access.

1016. Parish Clerk:

The Parish Clerk retires at the end of April 2024, the position has been advertised on the Kent Association of Local Councils website. It is suggested that in the interim period until a new clerk is in position that a Locum is sourced through Local Council Consultancy.

Resolved: to seek a Locum Clerk through Local Council Consultancy.

A vote of thanks was given to the Clerk.

1017. Other items for information:

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8:30pm.