

Minutes of a meeting of Aldington and Bonnington Parish Council held on Monday 12th February 2018 at 7.35pm at the Eco Centre, Goldwell Lane, Aldington.

Present Councillors: S Garrard (Chairman), M Boulden, R Boulding, C Fowler, P Kemp, W Parkinson, T Ransley, S Thornby and T Wright.

In attendance: Peter Setterfield PSLCC, Parish Clerk.

Also present 10 members of the public.

742. Statement by the Parish Council Chairman:

“I’d like to make a statement before we start the public sessions of this meeting.

The Parish Council is for the Community. And we welcome constructive input from the Community of course. That helps the Parish Council to be more effective.

However, there has been a growing tendency over the past several months towards the use of perceived hostile questioning both during the public participation session and also interruptions during the business of the Parish Council proper. This was particularly prevalent at the January meeting.

I believe that this growing tendency is both counterproductive and this unpleasantness can be a direct contributor to stress and ill-health for the Clerk and for Councillors, who are giving their time, doing their best for the villages, and so we are taking steps to improve the situation.

I remind everyone that the public participation session at the start of Parish Council meetings is a courtesy, not a right, and I ask for some courtesy to be shown to the Parish Council and its Clerk during those sessions. The subsequent part of the meeting is made up of discussions by elected councillors *in public*; it is not a forum for discussion and intervention *by the public*.

In order to calm things down so that we can make progress together, we are going to employ the system in the public participation session whereby members of the public signal that they would like to speak and wait to be requested to do so. Shouting out is not acceptable.

We reserve the right not to answer questions on the spot, but to get back to the questioner in writing within a few days. This will be done in cases, for example, where better information can be gathered with a bit more time, and also where questions appear to be vexatious in intent. Anyone wishing to be sure of having an answer on the spot should, in future, submit their question to the Clerk three days before the Parish Council meeting in order for a full answer to be prepared.

Certainly parishioners have the right to ask questions and to hold the Parish Council to account, but we are not here to be sniped at and, where there appears to be a concerted campaign against the Parish Council, we shall take steps to reduce the stress levels for all concerned.

Therefore, in view of the highly emotive atmosphere of last month’s meeting, and the frequent interruptions by members of the public into the business of the Parish Council meeting proper, from tonight’s meeting, we shall generally expect not to have public

participation in the business of the Parish Council meeting proper, unless requested by a Councillor. For example, if someone has raised an issue in the public participation session, they may be called upon to provide more information when the agenda item is discussed.

Thank you”.

743. Ashford Borough Councillor’s Report:

Councillor Martin reported briefly on the Landscape Protection Policy, Planning enforcement issues with the developer of Wheatfields as well as light pollution from Quarry House where a meeting is to be held to look at options.

744. To receive and accept apologies for absence:

There were no apologies for absence.

745. To receive any declarations of interest from Members:

There were no declarations of interest.

746. Public Participation Session:

A resident raised concerns about the level of dog fouling being seen at present in the vicinity of Reynolds Playing Field and the football pitches.

It was agreed that posters will be put up on the noticeboards and on the website reminding dog owners to clean up after their pets and that children play in the same area.

A resident reminded the Parish Council that the KCC member had agreed that missing signs would be replaced, leaning signs repaired and signage cleaned, to date this has not happened.

This will be followed up.

The matter of a Neighbourhood Plan and the Landscape Protection policy was raised as it appeared that the Parish Council were favouring a Neighbourhood Plan and not supporting the Landscape Protection Policy.

The Chairman responded that the exhibition was put in place to gauge public opinion and to see if there was support of a Neighbourhood Plan, the Council being neutral. It does support the Landscape Protection Policy and that the decisions last year were not to further finance as the Parish had already contributed substantial funds. And that there was an increased understanding between the Parish Council and Rural means Rural.

747. Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2018 were submitted, agreed and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

748. Chairman’s Report:

The Chairman reported briefly on the Exhibition held on 10th February and that the results would be circulated after the members of the Council had chance to review the

outcomes. A vote of thanks was proposed to Anna Ross for providing the refreshments at the event.

749. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

Cheque No	Payee	Detail	Amount
1279	Harmer & Sons	Grounds maintenance	£918.00
1280 & 1281	Staff costs		£1,152.34
1282	S Garrard	Reimbursement re exhibition	£173.52

RESOLVED:

- 1. To receive and note the items of expenditure and approve payment.**
- 2. To authorise the transfer of £3,000.00 from deposit account to current account.**

750. Allotments:

Councillor Kemp reported that renewal notices have been sent out and to date about 25% of the allotment tenants have renewed.

751. Aldington Village Hall:

Councillor Boulding reported that the film nights are due to recommence this month.

752. Skatepark:

Councillor Thornby reported that the contractor had still not responded to the request and further research will be carried out.

753. Correspondence:

- 1. Rural Vulnerability Service – Fuel Poverty.**
- 2. Rural Housing Spotlight.**
- 3. Information Commissioners Office newsletter.**
- 4. Rural Services Network – weekly news digest 15th January 2018.**
- 5. Rural Services Network – weekly news digest 22nd January 2018.**
- 6. Rural Services Network – weekly news digest 29th January 2018.**
- 7. Inside Track issue 251**
- 8. Rural Vulnerability Service – Rural Transport.**

754. Any Other Business:

Councillor Parkinson reported that he had recently visited the playgroup which was being well supported. The collection by Aldington Fire Station Santa raised £347 for the playgroup. They are still looking for funds to purchase tables and chairs. The Parish Council is awaiting details of the Section 106 monies available to it, some may be available for such a project. The matter will be placed on the next Parish Council agenda.

Councillor Garrard reported that she had been in touch with the 'Village Directory' which is delivered to all houses following the closure of the Church magazine to ascertain if the Parish Council could have some space. It has been agreed that the Parish Council can have a quarter page near the What's On section each month free of charge, if space permits more room can be given. Investigations are being held into the Parish Council having a Facebook page to which no comments can be posted.

Councillor Boulden reported drainage issues at Goldenhurst and the lower end of Calleywell Lane, a resident also mentioned opposite the Post Office. The Parish Clerk to take forward.

Councillor Wright raised the subject of the footpath between Roman Road and Earlsfield and the need for resurfacing, ownership is unclear but a parishioner believes it is the Borough Council and would check some documentation in his possession and advise the Clerk.

Councillor Wright enquired if the Parish Council could consider installing some picnic benches on Bramble Common. This will be placed on the next Parish Council agenda.

Councillor Thornby raised the matter of parking on the grass in Earlsfield and the installation of posts to prevent this.

755. Exclusion of the Public and Press:

RESOLVED: That under the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, the Public and representatives of the press and broadcast media be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business as publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest because of the confidential nature of the business to be conducted.

756. Grounds Maintenance:

REPORT ABPC/17/18 concerns the Parish Council Grounds Maintenance Contract which expires on 31st March 2018.

RESOLVED: To repeat the tender process as only one contractor had complied with the terms. The closing date for tenders to be set to allow time for inclusion on the March Agenda of the Parish Council.