

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF BRENCHLEY PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY 1st OCTOBER 2007 IN BRENCHLEY MEMORIAL HALL

Present

Chairman M Mackenzie presided, Cllrs B Stanley, D Jolley, R Berry, P Randall and Mrs M A Edmeads. M Powell, Clerk.

Apologies for absence

Cllrs J Barsley and F Playfoot for family commitments, Cllr A Lee for ill health.

Pecuniary and Personal Interests.

Members were reminded to declare any interest, as defined by the Council's Code of Conduct, on any matter appearing on the agenda or to advise the Council of any interest before speaking on any subject that may be raised.

Confirm minutes of previous meeting

The minutes were modified by the addition of Cllr R Berry's name to those apologising for absence, duly approved and signed by the Chairman.

Public question time.

Four members of the public attended plus PCSO N Brown who attended in the meeting's latter stages. One resident commented on the retrospective planning application for Poulhurst Bungalow in that the original application approval was for maintaining the existing height and that the new height was now well above sight lines and cannot be considered a minor amendment. The architect states that the manufacturer of the tiles requires a 35 degree pitch but he in fact failed to select an appropriate tile or that the design was wrong. The resident was of the opinion that applications that erode the AONB shouldn't be allowed and if this retrospective application is approved there is no point in planning control.

Another resident commented on the potential parking problem resulting from the development of the Old Palace, which could involve 15 to 20 cars. It could have a significant effect on village life and impinge on the businesses already there. The problem of access from Windmill Hill was understood as a highways issue and the resident asked if the Council had considered access through the Jack Verrall Garden. The Chairman replied that the number of cars was unlikely to change much as they already in the main existed with the previous residents. The issue of using the garden would be raised in AOB.

Planning Applications.

TW/07/03310/FUL/CLC

Poulhurst Bungalow Furnace Lane Brenchley

Retrospective application to raise ridge height over that previously approved.

Recommendation – Refusal

The Council recommended refusal for the same reasons as the original application 06/02214. The increase of roof height over that already approved is not considered a minor change and increases the volume even further. Subsequently it is not modest, contrary to H11. The Council also expressed its concern that the increase in roof angle necessary because of tiling problems should have been known to a qualified architect from the outset.

TW/07/03028/FUL/CT2

Cinder Hill Wood Gypsy site

Refurbishment

Recommendation-Approval

The Council expressed concern that the plan is kept to, as there are already many more vehicles than that provided for in the plans and further concern that any gas cylinders are safely sited in accordance with current fire regulations. The Council foresees regular enforcement by the Borough being necessary and would remind the Borough that if it fails to enforce the rules on the siting of vehicles and gas cylinders it could leave them open to a charge of negligence.

Decisions taken by TWBC**TW/07/02531/FUL/CLC**

Petteridge Oast Petteridge Lane Matfield

Variation of 06/02387 to allow additional rooflight and window

Recommendation- Approval Decision- Approval

TW/07/02700/FUL/CLC

12 Church Close Brenchley

Side extension

Recommendation-Approval Decision- Approval

Withdrawn Applications**TW/07/02732/FUL/CP3** Glebe House Brenchley

Loft conversion and new gables and dormer extension

Decisions taken by Clerk out of meeting

Following the ROSPA report the Clerk has inspected the playground surface and found that raking will not improve the levels. Therefore a further 6m³ of bark has been ordered and laid. The Clerk has also inspected the ramp of the slide and temporary repairs have been made pending a replacement. The Chairman proposed that the Clerk should be thanked for this work, which was agreed.

Meetings Attended**Speed Limits**

Cllr Stanley and the Clerk attended a briefing on the Rural Speed Limits project. A pilot study is being implemented reviewing speed limits across the country. However there is no government grant for implementation as yet so it may not be concluded. Further there are no plans to increase policing to enforce any changes. The PC will be consulted regarding our recommendations during next year and final decisions are expected 2010-11.

Crime

Cllr Jolley and the Clerk attended a presentation on Community sentencing, crime and punishment. It was found to be informative and highlighted potential benefits of Community orders over imprisonment. The Clerk was asked to enquire if an abbreviated presentation would be possible for inclusion in the Parish AGM.

Code Of Conduct for Councillors

The Clerk and Cllr Mackenzie have attended separate meetings/ training sessions on the subject of the new Code of Conduct. Some of the specific items of change discussed were: -

- At present if a Councillor has a pecuniary or prejudicial interest in an item he or she must declare it and leave the room immediately it comes to the Council. If Paragraph 12 is adopted it would appear that despite a pecuniary interest a Councillor may cross the room to the public area where he or she may then speak on the subject. Subsequently they must then leave the room before any debate and vote is performed.
- A Councillor is not obliged to declare a personal interest in an item unless you wish to speak and if you don't speak you may vote.
- Public bodies are treated differently from charitable bodies so if you have a connection with a charity you may speak on its behalf having previously declared a personal interest.
- If a Councillor accepts a gift in kind to a value of £25 or over that Councillor is deemed to have an interest in the source or benefactor of the gift for three years.
- Further new forms are required for declarations of interest such as governor-ships, property ownership etc that may be possible to be associated with any business the Council may consider. Councillors should be aware that they are not obliged to present these forms to the Clerk but if you do he will pass them on. If you do not, you are obliged to ensure that they are delivered to the Monitoring Officer, at present Lois Howell at TWBC. Any change of interests must also be notified within 28 days of the change.
- Before any item on the agenda can be considered as an "Exempt" item it must be formally proposed as exempt and a majority acceptance vote delivered. This must be minuted. If not

any person can challenge the withholding of information and may bring the matter to the Standards Board.

A resolution of adoption was proposed by the Chairman and seconded by Cllr Stanley. The Council voted unanimously to accept the proposal and the following was agreed.

We, Brenchley Parish Council resolve to formally adopt the Model Code of Conduct as laid out in Schedule 2 of Local Authorities (Model Code of Conduct) Order of 2007. The resolution of adoption also specifically includes Para 12 (2) relating to the Effect of prejudicial interests on participation. Further that the Council accepts and will govern its conduct to the standards outlined in The Ten General Principles as set out under the Relevant Authorities (General Principles) Order 2001.

Matters Arising **Playground.**

The ramp of the slide is breaking up. The replacement cost is £304 plus £280 delivery and installation. Playdale Ltd require 5 weeks notice and will reduce the £280 to £150 if the order for the ramp is received at the same time as an order for Phase one of the new equipment and to nil if received with an order for both Phase 1 and 2 together. Michael Noakes has been contacted and works to address the ROSPA inspection are scheduled for early October. Following a discussion the Clerk was authorised to order all of the proposed new equipment together with a replacement ramp with a lead-time long enough to know the outcome of the grant application.

Post Box

Following the theft of the Post Box on Gedges Hill the Clerk has been advised by Royal Mail that following a survey it was considered of sufficient use that they would replace it, although with a modern design as the old design is unavailable. The box is on order with the manufacturer and normal delivery is 6-8 weeks

CCTV

The Clerk was asked to research the costs of a mobile CCTV to assist in crime prevention. Initial estimates are around £9000 for a wireless system connecting via a broadband link with cell phone connection to £100 for a dummy camera. Running costs for working mobile equipment will be incurred. Further quotes are being sought but the potential field is large and a more specific brief is required to be precise. The possibility of a grant towards this has been enquired about. There is a TWBC Community Safety Partnership Community Chest, which is one possibility but will only cover a contribution to a project, not its entirety, and grants were likely to be a maximum of £500 to £1000. This is taken from a brief written before this year's 14% cut in funding from central government. The PCSO was asked if he could research the effectiveness of signs and CCTV, dummy or otherwise, in such a situation and whether the Police had any equipment that could be borrowed.

Correspondence

Citizens Advice Bureau

A copy of their annual report together with a request for a donation. After discussion it was agreed that the Council would donate £500

Campaign to Protect Rural England

A complimentary copy of "Fieldwork", their quarterly campaigning news letter together with an invitation to become a member for a minimum of £27 per annum. The Council, decided against joining.

TWBC

An invitation had been received to apply for a grant for Christmas decorations. The Clerk was asked to apply for £500

A request for comments re the Draft Statement of Licensing Policy had been received. This was passed to Cllr Stanley for consideration.

Copies of the latest Parish Charter had been received which were distributed.

A reply from Mrs Sheila Wheeler had been received by the Chairman in response to discussions held regarding the choice of affordable housing sites. The Clerk was asked to distribute this to Councillors via email.

School Crossing.

The PCSO had emailed the Chairman regarding the lack of a School Crossing Patrol outside Brenchley School. The content explained that Highways Department had limited funds available to provide such a service and a Patrol Officer would now only be afforded if the crossing was required all day and not just at certain hours in the morning and afternoon.

Action with Rural Communities in Kent

Autumn edition of Oast to Coast was distributed.

KAPC

Issue 327 of Parish News

An invitation to attend training to achieve a Certificate in Local Council Administration had been received. The cost of £105.75 plus Vat for 3 days the Council agreed to and asked the Clerk to attend this training.

BTCV

An invitation to continue contributing to the Tree Warden Scheme had been received and a request for £100 donation was agreed to together with acceptance of paying for any courses considered desirable on an individual basis.

Residents

A copy of a letter from a resident to TWBC complaining about the refurbishment of Poulhurst Bungalow and the fact that the roof height is higher than the plans.

Youth Opportunities.

A copy of an application form for a grant for Youth Opportunities projects had been received. The Clerk was asked to distribute this to the local school and other interested organisations.

Accounts for payment

Small Loads Ltd	Bark for playground	£277.30
Post Office Ltd	Tax & NI	£319.68
TWBC	Lease for Cinder Hill Wood	£40.00
KAPC	Training	£105.75
CAB	Donation	£500.00
BTCV	Donation-Tree Warden Scheme	£100.00

Monies Received

Matfield Post Office	Sale of walking maps	£7.30
Brenchley Post Office	Sale of walking maps	£14.60
TWBC	2 nd half year precept	£21000.00

Other Matters as maybe Notified

Cinder Hill Wood

KHWP in conjunction the Challenger Troop, part of the Territorial Army hopes to run an activities event for disaffected young people. The event will take the form of a survival skills and bushcraft activity including fire creation and cooking. 20 pupils can be accommodated at a time and they will spend the night there under their own shelters.

Jack Verrall Garden

Due to the high level of maintenance required Cllr Playfoot via the Clerk has asked Councils opinion on the grassing over of the area on the right hand side of the garden where it adjoins the Old Palace. The Council agreed this was acceptable. However, the Council also discussed its opinion of selling a section of the garden to allow parking access to the Old Palace. It concluded that if a proposal were to be presented it would consider it.

Oil Tanks.

Cllr Berry reported that oil tanks had become visible in the house between the Brenchley School and Brenchley Garage and that if publically owned would by regulation require bunding. The Clerk was asked to enquire of the school if they owned the property.

Gateway

TWBC have bought a site at Fiveways in Tunbridge Wells as a public access "Gateway" to the services of the Borough. The Clerk was asked to enquire if the premises would be open on Saturdays and if it would have on that day a Planning Services enquiry desk.

Pipes in Maycotts lane.

Cllr Jolley reported that the lengths of blue piping left in Maycotts Lane were destined as water mains replacement pipes and Clancy Docwra would be installing them in Foxhole Lane shortly.

Christmas Lights

The subject of replacing the Christmas lights with low voltage LED equipment was discussed and generally agreed as being acceptable subject to cost. It was also discussed that recruiting volunteers to help in their erection especially in the tree in Brenchley was potentially a health and safety hazard. An alternative was to consider the hire of a "cherry picker". Cllr Berry said he would research any companies locally that would loan such a piece of equipment and the Clerk would enquire on rental costs.

Date of next meeting

A planning meeting will be held in Brenchley Memorial Hall on Tuesday 23rd October at 7.30pm.