

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Held on Monday 21st January 2008 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors
Mr Jacques
Mr Horne
Mr Morley
Mr Smith – attended late
Mr Waite

The meeting was Chaired by Councillor Jacques.

Also in attendance: Mrs Sherrie Babington – Clerk, Fran Wilson - Leader of MBC, Members of the Public and Press.

The Chairman welcomed Fran Wilson, Leader of Maidstone Borough Council to the meeting.

1. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillor Pilkington and Councillor Smith who may arrive to the meeting late.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes from last Parish Council Meeting.

The minutes were discussed and agreed (Horne/Waite), these were then signed and dated by the Chairman of the meeting.

The Chairman congratulated the Clerk on obtaining her CICLA qualification.

4. Matters Arising from Minutes.

Councillor Horne informed members that the planning application for Valhalla had been refused by the Borough Council.

5. Police Report.

PCSO Jennifer Baulf attended the meeting and gave her report to the meeting.

Councillor Sandford asked how she was travelling around the parish, she confirmed that at present she was sharing a vehicle with the PCSO from Boxley.

6. The Leader of Maidstone Borough Council.

The Chairman introduced Fran Wilson, the Leader of the Borough Council to the meeting.

Mrs Wilson apologised for not attending the November meeting due to illness.

She spoke regarding the two main issues affecting MBC at present, LDF and KIG. She reported that the Highways Agency had now served a Section 14 on the applicants as they were not satisfied with the information supplied, as a result the Borough Council could not take any further action at present.

Mrs Wilson stated that the KIG application had also disrupted the programme of work for the Local Development Framework and the consultation for the LDF was not likely

to be until September 08 at the earliest. She stated that in the mean time MBC was trying to progress other policies.

She confirmed that the work on the Core Strategy was still ongoing, she stated that it was unlikely that the main thrust of the LDF would change, however all options would be considered.

Dennis Fowle of the Downs Mail asked for clarification of matters regarding the KIG Planning Application.

Other challenges and risks to MBC was the Concessionary Fares Scheme which was now under threat due to the Governments implementation of a National Scheme. She stated that this is of serious concern to the administration of MBC and clarification of some issues were still being sought by the Borough Council.
A discussion took place as to how this would impact on the rural community.

Peter Waite asked about the relationships with officers at MBC and how well the council offices were led. He referred to problems that the Parish Council had encountered regarding planning applications He spoke of the history of applications that are building up and the architecture of these stating that the emphasis appeared to have diverted and the officers at MBC did not seem to consider public opinion regarding developments.

Councillor Waite circulated photographic evidence to demonstrate the problems at Detling Aerodrome Estate and the ineffective council action.

Fran Wilson spoke regarding the problems that MBC had with the planning department over the years, she referred to the Borough Councils 5 year plan and the planning policies that were in place to deal with planning applications.
She spoke regarding the positive issues that had taken place to improve the situation within the planning department.

Councillor Jacques spoke regarding the Parish Councils Parish Plan and the value of the Parish Council undertaking a Village Design Statement. Fran Wilson confirmed that for these documents to be adopted as supplementary planning guidance that they needed to fit in planning terms.

Council Smith spoke about the Parish Councils concerns regarding the lack of a safe crossing in Ware Street. He referred to the development at Ragstone Place being built without a provision for a safe crossing.

Fran Wilson spoke in response to the concerns and she confirmed that at present pre-application discussions do not take place.
She spoke about the amount of work undertaken by MBC Officers and their work load.

Councillor Horne stated that the Parish Council was particularly anxious about Ragstone Place and informed members that the safe crossing at Ware Street was now subject to a Pipkin Assessment and this was being looked into by Clive English. He asked Fran Wilson if she too would look into this matter.

Richard Jacques stated that the Parish Council was seeking lateral thinking, it was about quality of life issues that affected all residents. He stated that Ware Street was a dangerous road and the crossing should be considered as priority.

Fran Wilson stated that she would be willing to take this matter away and look into this further.

Councillor Sandford spoke regarding the water strategy in the South East and he read a report from CPRE, he asked what MBC's water strategy was for the North Downs area.

Fran Wilson stated that the two biggest risks for MBC were flood and drought, she stated that the problems were well recognised and MBC are working closely with KCC and the Environment Agency on a forward strategy. She spoke regarding the need for infrastructure to be in place to sustain development.

Fran Wilson was asked about the new recycling arrangements for the Borough and she explained how these would work.

Councillor Morley referred to the identity of Thurnham and stated that his wish was for the people in Maidstone to know that Thurnham exists.

Councillor Jacques stated that as Chairman of Thurnham Parish Council he felt that the identity of Thurnham was a major concern and he referred to the postcode problem affecting Thurnham.

Councillor Waite referred to the LDF Consultation, he stated that TPC had a lot of room for concern, it was appalled to hear that MBC were ploughing ahead for Option 1 despite a preference for the other options. He stated that the PC had written to Fran Wilson regarding this issue and spoke of the response to this.

Mrs Wilson spoke regarding the Borough of Maidstone, she stated that the planning needs to be right to protect the community, she suggested undertaking an exercise with the Parish Council regarding this. The PC agreed with this suggestion and stated that it would be happy to undertake such an exercise.

The Chairman thanked Fran Wilson for taking time to attend the Parish Council meeting.

7. Financial Matters:

The financial statement was agreed by members (Smith/Waite).

Members discussed the Parish Councils website.

8. 2008/2009 Budget.

The 2008/2009 Draft Budget was circulated to all members.

Councillor Smith spoke regarding this. And proposed a precept of £11,000.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Sandford and agreed by all present.

Action: PRECEPT AGREED £11,000.

9. Request for Financial Assistance for Church Youth Worker.

Members considered the request for a donation from the church, the presentation given by the Vicar and the Youth Worker at the previous meeting, and the agreement in

principal to consider a donation subject to the clarification of the legalities by the Clerk. The Clerk confirmed that the PC was legally able to give a one-off donation and presented members with a report to confirm this.

It was proposed by Councillor Horne to give a donation of £260.00, subject to a report from the Youth Worker on the work undertaken within Thurnham for the December meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Waite and agreed by all present.

Action: Donation of £260.00 agreed.

10. Planning Matters.

MA/08/0029 Cobham Manor Riding Centre, Water Lane.

Change of use of land for the stationing of two mobile homes for full-time accommodation for staff and students.

It was agreed that the Planning Committee would hold a site meeting to look at this application.

11. Future Agenda Items.

It was agreed to place for following items on the next agenda:

- Heritage Award.
- Village Design Statement – March Agenda.

12. Clerks Duties & Salary Review – to be discussed as a confidential item.

It was agreed that this item would be discussed as a confidential item at the close of the meeting.

13. Date next Meeting.

18th February 2008.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 9:38pm

Signed: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____