

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THURNHAM PARISH COUNCIL
Held on Monday 17th March 2008 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors
Mr Jacques
Mr Horne
Mr Morley
Mr Pilkington
Mr Sandford
Mr Smith
Mr Waite

The meeting was Chaired by Councillor Jacques.

Also in attendance: Mrs Sherrie Babington – Clerk, Members of the Public and Press.

1. Apologies.

No apologies were received.

2. Declaration of Interests.

No interests were declared.

3. Minutes from last Parish Council Meeting.

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

4. Matters Arising from Minutes.

Councillor Sandford reported on the Gypsy sites within Thurnham, he informed members that in all there were 13 pitches within the parish.

Councillor Horne spoke regarding this matter and the study currently being undertaken by the Borough Council. He suggested that the PC might consider inviting an officer to attend a future meeting of the PC.

This was discussed further and the Clerk was asked to liaise with MBC to ensure that they had the correct figures for the parish.

5. Parish Councillor Vacancies.

The Clerk reported that one application had been received for the Parish Councillor vacancy from Anna Bloomfield.

The Clerk informed members that Anna Bloomfield had given her apologies to the meeting due to prior commitments but had given her permission for members to consider her application in her absence.

Members discussed this matter and it was proposed by Councillor Waite and seconded by Councillor Horne to co-opt Anna Bloomfield onto the Parish Council, this was agreed by all present.

The Clerk informed all that Mrs Bloomfield would be required to sign her Declaration of Acceptance of Office at the next meeting and she would place this as an item on the agenda.

Action: Clerk to place item on next agenda.

6. Public Comments and Observations.

A resident attended the meeting to speak regarding the planning application for Valhalla and the way in which this had been dealt with by MBC. He raised concerns about the procedures that had been followed by the Borough Council with regards to the report to the Planning Committee.

The Chairman spoke in response to these concerns and Councillor Horne stated that he too had concerns at the way in which this was dealt with; he confirmed that he had raised this matter with Alison Broom.

Councillor Horne referred to the Urgent Update report submitted to the planning committee, which included representations from the Parish Council, KCC Footpaths Officer and also two petitions from residents containing 22 and 23 signatures.

He stated that these reports were not mentioned by the Planning Committee when considering this application.

Councillor Jacques asked members what action they wished to take regarding this matter.

This was discussed and it was agreed that this should not pass without comment. It was agreed that the PC Planning Committee should draft a letter to the Borough Council to outline the concerns of the PC.

Action: Planning Committee to draft letter to MBC.

It was also agreed that the Clerk should liaise with other Parish Councils within the Borough to ascertain whether they had similar problems with the planning process of the Borough Council.

Action: Clerk to liaise with other PC's.

7. Kent International Gateway.

Councillor Jacques reported that the next meeting was due to take place on 18th March 2008.

8. Chairman's Report.

The Chairman gave his report to the meeting and reported on the recent correspondence that he had received from Bearsted Parish Council asking for support from Thurnham with regards to the extension of the car park at Bearsted Railway Station.

This was discussed by all present and it was agreed to give full support to BPC.

Action: Clerk to write to BPC.

9. Clerks Report.

The Clerks report was noted by all present.

1. Letter received from St Mary's Church PCC – noted.
2. KHS – Maidstone Area – Automatic Traffic Count Sites –The Clerk was asked to respond to this letter to ask for a traffic count to be undertaken along Ware Street.
Action: Clerk to action.
3. Boxley PC – Copy correspondence re Grove Green- noted.
4. MBC – Planning Enforcement – noted.

10. External Reports:

- a. Police Report.
Apologies were given by the police.

Councillor Pilkington spoke regarding inappropriate activities along Cold Blow Lane where vehicles were driving across fields. He stated that he had telephoned the police regarding this, however they had failed to respond to the call. This matter was discussed and members were concerned at the lack of response from the police and their lack of support for the outlying areas. This was discussed and it was agreed that the Clerk should write to invite Inspector Sandwell to attend the next PC meeting.

Action: Clerk to write to police as agreed.

b. Ward Councillor's Report.

Councillor Horne gave his report to the meeting.

He spoke regarding a safe crossing over Ware Street and contact that he had with Alison Broom and Fran Wilson regarding this matter.

He reported that the crossing was being put forward for a PIPKIN Assessment.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Horne for his work on this matter.

Councillor Horne spoke regarding the air quality in the area and his aim to have this extended to include junction 7 and 8. This was discussed and the need for the results of such an assessment was agreed.

c. County Councillors Report.

Apologies were received from Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart.

d. Liaison with outside parties.

No reports were given.

11. Financial Matters:

a. Request for financial assistance from the Bearsted Choral Society.

Councillor Horne spoke regarding the request for financial assistance from the Bearsted Choral Society and the reason behind the letter received by the PC.

Councillor Smith gave his views on this matter and the reasons why he felt that it would be inappropriate for the PC to give such a donation. Councillor Jacques spoke in support of the comments from Councillor Smith.

The request for financial assistance was debated by all present and it was unanimously agreed that it would not be appropriate for the PC to give such a donation.

Action: Clerk to respond to the Bearsted Choral Society.

b. Financial Statement.

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

A discussion took place with regards to the refurbished notice board and the possible location for this. It was agreed to place this item on the next agenda.

Action: Clerk to place item on next agenda.

12. Parish Matters.

a. Averanches Road Ransom Strip.

The Clerk confirmed that a letter ad been sent to Wimpey's, however as yet a response had not yet been received. It was agreed to write a further letter to Wimpey's.

Action: Clerk to write to Wimpeys.

b. Footpaths and Bridleways.

Councillor Waite informed members that Medway Valley Partnership was due to undertake an additional days planting on footpath KH123.

c. Website.

The Clerk circulated a report to all present regarding the website.

It was suggested that there may be an opportunity for a school or college to undertake the website as a project for the PC. This was discussed and it was agreed to investigate this suggestion further.

Action: Clerk to investigate and report back to the next meeting.

13. Committee Reports.

a. Planning.

MA/08/0117 Bearsted Woodland Trust, Church Landway, Bearsted – No objections.
Erection of a tractor/mower store.

MA/08/0281 Millgate Lodge, Caring Lane, Thurnham – No objections.
Alterations to existing dwelling including provision of accommodation in roof space, provision of dormer windows and replacement of existing gables with hips and recladding of external elevations with tile hanging and render.

MA/08/0322 Aerodrome Pit Stop Ltd, Aerodrome Estate, Detling – No objections.
Erection of additional wash bay for commercial vehicles and erection of two buildings comprising office and reception and valet bay/workshop.

MA/08/0020 The Retreat, Ware Street, Thurnham – currently with Planning Committee.
Outline Planning permission for the erection of 1 new dwelling with means of access to be considered at this stage and all other matters to be reserved for future consideration.

Councillor Jacques spoke regarding 23 Caring Lane and the invoice that had been received from Brachers. He asked members for their views on the situation and suggested that the PC may wish to go to the Ombudsman and seek Counsels opinion itself should this be necessary. This was discussed by all present and it was agreed that the PC should progress this matter itself.

Action: Clerk to correspond with Brachers and seek the necessary papers to progress this matter itself.

b. Highways.

It was reported that a number of potholes along Thurnham Lane had been filled, however some had been marked but not yet filled. The Clerk was asked to ascertain when these would be actioned.

It was also reported that the verges along Thurnham Lane were in a poor state and needed to be reinstated.

Action: Clerk to report to Kent Highways.

c. Parish Plan.

Councillor Morley gave a report on the progress of the Parish Plan. He informed members that the costings for the plan had been finalised. The official launch date had been agreed for 26th April 2008 and all residents would be invited.

14. M20/A249.

Nothing to report.

15. Village Design Statement.

Councillor Waite reported on the recent ACRK Village Design Workshop that he had attended. He spoke of the importance of a parish having a VDS and the need for Thurnham to explore this route.

Councillor Waite suggested that the parish should establish a group to look at this matter; he stated that there was guidance available on VDS's and the document when completed could be adopted as supplementary planning guidance.

Councillor Jacques asked members how they wished to progress this item.

This was discussed and it was suggested that the PC holds an open meeting with volunteers looking at specific areas.

It was agreed that there was a need for support from residents and that the PC needed to engage with the residents in order to seek volunteers.

Councillor Waite suggested that the PC make contact with Mr Turner, a VDS Consultant to establish whether he would be prepared to attend a meeting/open day with the PC.

Action: Councillor Waite to make contact with representative to establish availability and date options.

16. Ordnance Survey

Councillor Smith informed members that he had purchased an ordnance survey map for the PC at a cost of £13.99.

The Clerk informed members that she had been in contact with MBC and they are now allowed to include parish council under their existing Ordnance Survey Licence.

Councillor Jacques asked the Clerk to establish further details as to whether the PC would be able to use the GIS System.

Action: Clerk to action.

The Clerk was also asked to seek costings on a parish laptop and projector system.

Action: Clerk to action.

17. Heritage Award.

The Chairman informed the meeting that a letter had been received from Councillor Horne regarding his new role as Heritage Champion. He suggested that the PC might wish to establish an Annual Award of the Fortifications Network.

The PC considered this suggestion positively, and Councillor Waite suggested that the award could be extended to cover other heritage issues, this was agreed by all present.

Councillor Horne's specific proposals regarding the Fortifications Network were agreed and Councillor Horne was asked to work up specific details for the PC.

Action: Councillor Horne to progress.

18. Future Items.

Rural Roads – Agenda Item.

19. Date of next meeting.

The Chairman asked members permission to fetch the date of the July PC meeting forward a week from 21st July to 14th July, this was agreed by all present.

Action: Clerk to circulated new dates for PC meetings.

Date of next meeting – 21st April 2008.

There being no further business, the meeting was closed to the press and public at 9:45pm

Signed: _____

Chairman

Dated: _____