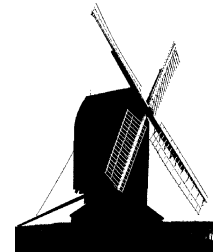


Rolvenden Parish Council



Minutes of a meeting of Rolvenden Parish Council held in Rolvenden Village Hall, Rolvenden on 18th July 2024 at 7.30pm.

Present: Cllr A Hinge (Chairman), Cllr S Bryant (Vice Chairman), Cllr C Balch, Cllr M Gilchrist, Cllr J Green, Cllr H Toni-Back and Cllr L Walker.

In attendance: Louise Goldsmith, Incoming Parish Clerk and Julie Flenley, Locum Parish Clerk

21 Members of the public were also in attendance

Locum Clerk: 2 Farm Cottages
Combe Court Farm
Prestwick Lane
Chiddingfold
Surrey, GU8
4XW Email:
rolvendenclerk@gmail.com

Public participation:

A resident noted that the AGAR figures which were discussed at item 1063 (June 2024 meeting) were correct. The resident further mentioned that the website is still showing three vacancies which is incorrect. The number of Councillors representing each area also needs to be corrected. The resident also noted a number of small amendments to the draft June minutes. Cllr Hinge noted.

A parishioner noted that the Locum's hours in May was a significant increase from April's invoice. Cllr Hinge noted that the Locum Clerk had worked a 5-week month and that a full timesheet with associated jobs list had been provided. The Locum was contracted 15 hours per week but May was a busy month and that the Annual Parish Assembly had been organised from scratch and there had been considerable work put in to getting the council back on track. The Locum Clerk noted that she had taken an executive decision to carry out the works over her allotted hours (an extra 17 hours) to ensure that the council was compliant (or working towards compliance) in a number of areas where it had not been and it was to ensure the success of the council going forward.

A resident noted that the s106 funds were outstanding to the football club and that invoices had been submitted to the council, but no response had been received. Cllr Hinge acknowledged that the invoices were outstanding because of the need to establish access to Unity Trust Bank and that no invoices were currently being paid by Rolvenden Parish Council. It was to be discussed at agenda item 1078, beneath.

A resident noted that the village gateway was in disrepair and required attention. In lieu of highways, there was a lack of progress on issues and requested parish council assistance. The incoming Clerk advised that she would contact KCC Highways and request a copy of the current version of the Highways Improvement Plan for the village. A resident confirmed the name of the Community Engagement Officer at KCC.

A member of the public requested that the size and decorations on the Christmas tree is reviewed this year. A member of the public requested that the 'guidance on attending meetings' paper is made gender neutral.

A parishioner advised that a Police Surgery is due to take place in the village hall on Thursday 2 August from 9.30am to 12pm and encouraged residents to attend. The Beat Officer will be in attendance to discuss concerns regarding local issues.

1070. Apologies for absence:

Apologies were received from Councillors Barham and Geerts.

1071. Declarations of interest:

Cllr Bryant noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust.

Cllr Hinge noted an interest in the War Memorial Trust. Locum Clerk noted for the record.

1072. Minutes:

Councillors approved the minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 20th June 2024 with amendments. Clerk to retain for the record.

1073. Ashford Borough Councillor's Report:

Cllr Walder was unable to attend. No report was given.

1074. Chairman's report:

Since the last June meeting there has been relatively little for the council to do beyond the usual maintenance and statutory jobs. This is largely a reflection of the interim position and hand over situation with the clerks, whereby it has been of little benefit to start something that would then need revisiting. It has also been limited by the inability to access the bank account. Our priority has been to achieve this, and I can report that we now have sufficient councillors to act

Chairmans signature.....

as authorising signatories to allow for outstanding invoices to be paid and a full evaluation and reconciliation of accounts, along with the correct authorities are in place. Louise will be working on this over the coming week as her principle priority.

The AGAR and Notice of Appointment of date for the Exercise of Public rights have been posted, all but somewhat late on the notice boards, but within the time limit on the website. This is in part my fault as I was out of the country and the keys were not available to anyone.

I have carried out necessary playground checks and we will be authorising maintenance with the landscape contractors to the surfaces in the very near future along with replacement parts to the swing, now that we are in a position to place orders. I have made a number of reports to Kent Highways and Ashford Council regarding fly tipping and roadside maintenance at the request of residents.

I have also met with and discussed some environmental and other parish maintenance issues with a resident, some of which maybe the responsibility of the council, but much are outside our areas of responsibility. I will be assessing these with the Clerk to see what can be done.

The next month will be very busy as the new Clerk gets to grips with fully updating the financial situation, website maintenance and records maintenance and I will be assisting her fully with this.

A number of councillors will be attending a KALC planning training meeting at ABC on Monday 22nd July 2024.

1075. Clerk's report:

The incoming Clerk, Louise Goldsmith gave an introduction to the council and public gallery.

I have been a Parish Clerk for 14 years. My first parish was Addington and I have just resigned from there and the neighbouring parish Trottscliffe to become the Parish Clerk and RFO for Rolvenden. In 2019 I moved to Headcorn from Tonbridge with the aim of becoming a Clerk to more local parishes. I took on High Halden in 2020 and they are delighted that I will now be your Clerk. I hold the Certificate in Local Council Administration and have worked in the Public Sector all of my working life and have worked for the London Borough of Bromley and Surrey County Council. My aim is to ensure that procedures are followed but I am also keen for all of my parishes to develop a relationship with their parishioners. I believe community engagement is essential and I do hope that you will contact me directly about any issues you may want to bring to the attention of the Parish Council. I am not here to discuss the past and just want to move the Parish Council forward. As you know there are number of new Councillors on the Parish Council and I will be encouraging them and all Councillors to undertake some training. We will be reviewing all of the policies and will look to develop an Action Plan which we will share in due course.

I am very much looking forward to working with you but having only started this week it will be a few weeks before I am up to speed. I would be very grateful if any former Councillors or member of the public want to contact me to share information on something they feel I should know.

Planning Training for Councillors: Cllrs. Hinge, Gilchrist and Green are attending a course organised by the Kent Association of Local Councils Ashford Area Committee on Monday 22 July. The course is being run by Simon Cole, the Assistant Director Planning and Development, who intends to give attendees an insight into how to respond to planning applications and S106 funding.

1] Playground Checks: Been undertaken

2] Declaration of Acceptance of Office forms have been received from Cllrs. Walker, Back and Geert and signed by the Proper Office. A copy of the Code of Conduct and Standing Orders has been issued.

3] Website: Looking to revamp and update the website so please bear with us during the interim period. The revamp is likely to involve the adoption of a .gov.uk domain and dedicated email addresses for all Councillors.

4] The Clerk advised that ABC is holding a series of 'Our Local Plan Explained' events throughout July and August 2024 and would like to hear the views of residents on Ashford's future and any particular issues residents are facing in their local area. Events are being held across the borough in Ashford Town Centre, South Ashford, North Ashford, Tenterden, Wye, Charing, Hamstreet and Chilham and there will be two 'virtual' events. The 'drop in' sessions will be open to all members of the community and there will be extensive communication to advertise the events to generate interest. In addition, a 'Frequently Asked Questions' and electronic 'information pack' will be produced prior to the events and published on the website.

1076. Planning:

To consider any planning applications received prior to the meeting.

- **Planning application PA/2024/0946 - 34 High Street, Rolvenden, Ashford, Kent TN17 4LN.** Erection of summer house. Cllr Hinge motioned to support the proposals. Seconded by Cllr Walker. Agreed unanimously, motioned carried. Locum Clerk noted for the record,
- **Planning application NOT/2024/1157 - St Mary the Virgin Church, Maytham Road, Rolvenden.** T1 - veteran Yew - showing stress cracks in trunk due to elongated limb - propose using 8 tonne bracing to support this. T2 - yew - by war memorial that has low overhanging branches over the path - impeded pedestrian access - propose to lift these to 2.4m from the ground. T3 - Holly - to SE of Church - sustained winter damage - shows little sign of recovery in the crown - proposed to pollard to 3.5m from ground level. T4 - Hawthorn - proposed removal as unsightly now. Councillors motioned to refer the proposal to the Tree Warden for comment. Agreed unanimously, motioned carried. Locum Clerk noted for the record.
- **Planning application OTH/2024/1240 - The Old Parsonage, 24 Hastings Road, Rolvenden, TN17 4LS.** G6 – Boundary fence - Cut and clear a 1 metre strip along back of neighbour’s property, leave screen at Eastern end. Raise crowns on trees behind the 1 metre strip which are overhanging the boundary fence to approximately 5 metres. Any branches above 5 metres cut back to beyond boundary. Councillors motioned to refer the proposal to the Tree Warden for comment. Agreed unanimously, motioned carried. Locum Clerk noted for the record.
- **Planning application NOT/2024/1249 - The Old Parsonage, 24 Hastings Road, Rolvenden, TN17 4LS.** T2 – Birch - 40% dead Approximate height 14m: Remove deadwood back to live growth – removing approximately 3m to 4m to a height of approximately 10m. Councillors motioned to refer the proposal to the Tree Warden for comment. Agreed unanimously, motioned carried. Locum Clerk noted for the record.

1077. To discuss the listing of Rolvenden landing craft:

Cllr Bryant noted that the Rolvenden landing craft site was of local and national historic importance, and was an important feature of WWII, with the American Forces staying in the vicinity before the D-Day Landings. Cllr Bryant proposed that Rolvenden Parish Council apply to Historic England for the site to be listed. Cllr Hinge enquired as to whether the landowner was engaged as the site was located on private land. Cllr Bryant noted that they had, but it had been difficult.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED TO ALLOW FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL – 8.30PM

Following on from a discussion with members of the public gallery, Cllr Hinge proposed that the Rolvenden History Society be engaged with the potential listing application with support from RPC. Seconded by Cllr Green, agreed, motion carried. Cllr Bryant to take forward with the Rolvenden History Society following a meeting with the landowner, Cllr Hinge and the Clerk.

STANDING ORDERS RECOMMENCED 8.35PM

1078. To discuss Barrett Field and to note actions going forward

Cllr Hinge noted that there was a discussion in the public section of the meeting on the s106 funding for the football club. Funds would be released once banking has re-established with Unity Trust Bank and the situation was clear. Invoices had been received in May for outstanding payments and the Clerk is in the process of establishing the situation with Ashford Borough Council in terms of payments to Rolvenden Parish Council to ascertain exactly what needed to be settled with the football club.

STANDING ORDERS SUSPENDED TO ALLOW FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO ADDRESS THE COUNCIL – 8.44PM

Cllr Walker asked whether the parish council had reported the football club for planning enforcement breaches (there had been a notification circulated by the Locum Clerk on 8th July citing reference [ENF/2024/0127](#) where the Enforcement team had been in attendance to the football grounds at Barrett Field and decided that it was not in the public interest to pursue the breach of planning. The Locum Clerk confirmed that she had no knowledge of the report until the email from Enforcement was received. It was also noted that the lease situation required resolution on the pitches and that funding for legal fees would be required so liaising needed to occur with the landowner and football club representatives to move the situation forward.

STANDING ORDERS RECOMMENCED 8.58PM

It was proposed by Cllr Hinge that Rolvenden Parish Council would settle the invoice for £5,100 as soon as possible, and that an the incoming Clerk would find out from ABC if an application could be submitted for S106 funding to assist

with the legal fees for the new lease to resolve the lease situation. Motion to pay the £5,100 S106 funding due and to approach ABC about the possibility of funding the legal fees. Seconded by Cllr Walker. Agreed unanimously. Motion carried. Clerk to pay and liaise with ABC. The football club were advised that if an application is unsuccessful they will need to pay the invoice for the legal fees

1079. To discuss the possibility of a Community Orchard and possible locations:

The incoming Clerk advised that ABC has received funding from DEFRA to mark the Coronation of King Charles III to purchase trees to be used to plant Community Orchards. ABC has approached the parishes to see if they would be willing to plant a Community Orchard. The incoming Clerk advised that the aim is that the trees will be adopted by local residents and therefore would require very little maintenance. A number of sites were suggested to include the War Memorial Trust land, allotment sites, primary school and the Thorburn Trust land. It was confirmed that the land could also be privately owned. The incoming Clerk will prepare a short questionnaire to be placed on social media and the website asking residents for their views on this proposal and will investigate the feasibility of the suggested sites.

1080. Finance:

Schedule of payments:

- Hole Park (Christmas Tree 2023)	£192	Inv. SI26515
- Tompsett Landscapes (June grass cutting)	£1,988.02	Inv. 3016
- Hugo Fox (Website)	£11.99	inv. 5466
- Maureen Brookes (Litter picking)	£120	N/A
- SLCC – Locum Fees, May 2024	£5,465.68	Inv. 765
- Allotments Society/A. Gray – Improvement works	£11,000	Inv. 741

Councillors unanimously agreed the payment schedule for July 2024 but deferred payment of the allotments invoice of £11,000 pending investigation of the s106 Agreement. Locum Clerk to liaise with the incoming Clerk to arrange payment of invoices from Unity Trust Bank, and to make payments of outstanding invoices going forward.

1081. Other items for information and inclusion on a future agenda:

- s106 funding, payments to Tenterden Tigers (including outstanding invoices)
- s106 legal fees to resolve football club lease - £1,600
- Rolvenden Christmas tree
- Community Orchard sites
- Highways Improvement Plan

1082. Meeting dates for 2024/25

To note the next meeting dates for Rolvenden Parish Council

- 15th August 2024

There being no further business the meeting closed at 9:23pm