

MINUTES OF THE EATON BRAY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
HELD on 4th. December 2006 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Cllrs. M. Beal (In the chair)
R. Brand
J. Conner
M. Crace
P. Gallagher
M. Heyland
D. Marriage
D. Pearson
R. Windmill

IN ATTENDANCE: Clerk: E. Bird

ALSO PRESENT: County Councillor Brian Piggott
Mr. N. Leigh
Two members of the public.

1. APOLOGIES: None

2. NEW COUNCILLOR:

The Chairman welcomed Maria Crace as a new Parish Councillor. After introducing herself, Maria completed and signed the Acceptance of Office of Councillor and Notification of Financial and Other Interests.

3. SPECIFIC DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr. D. Marriage declared an interest in the Sports & Social Club due to his position on the management committee.

4. PUBLIC FORUM:

Mr. S. Willis addressed the council with reference to a letter he had received from SBDC in response to his complaints about the District Council Planning committee's response to their objections to a planning application for land adjacent to Bower Lane, and the incorrect representation of the area of Greenbelt land to the rear of 20-23 Medley Close. Mr. Willis does not feel that the letter explained the anomaly. The Clerk had not received a response to the PC's letter requesting an explanation. The Clerk will follow this up with SBDC.

Clerk

Mr. Chris Kimpton thanked the Council for considering his request for support for his expedition. The Chairman explained that the PC could not commit public funds to this; a number of different possible sources of funds were suggested to Mr. Kimpton together with the Council's best wishes for success.

5. ITEM MOVED DOWN AGENDA

6. CHAIRMAN'S CORRESPONDENCE & COMMENTS.

The following correspondence has been received:

A letter from a resident of Mill End Close concerning upkeep of hedgerows, G.P. to investigate and report back.

A note of thanks from the Poppy Appeal organiser for the donation of £75 for wreaths, also giving the information that a total of £1,512.11 had been raised in the village.

GP

Copies of Alarm Notification Order leaflets from SBDC, giving details of the new order effective from 26th Nov.2006 that requires owners of commercial and residential properties fitted with burglar alarms to register keyholder information with SBDC not later than 24th Dec.2006.

Renewal notice from V & A Community Action inviting the council to continue membership for 2007. Proposed by Cllr Heyland, seconded by Cllr Brand, agreed unanimously to continue membership. GP committee to consider and complete an enclosed questionnaire regarding services that might be of use to the council.

GP

An email regarding fly tipping in The Comp, the Clerk was asked to contact SBDC.

Clerk

An email from Ross Bagni informing the council that work to the tennis courts is complete, and thanking the PC for help facilitating the work.

A report from PC Josh Tonkin giving the crime figures for November as follows: Total of 16 offences – 1 aggravated burglary, 1 criminal damage, 3 criminal damage to vehicles, 3 miscellaneous theft, 3 other burglary (allotments etc.), 1 criminal damage to a building, 1 assault, 2 theft from shop, 1 theft from motor vehicle.

The council asked the Clerk to contact Kay Litchfield for information about when the new beat manager starts, also to try and get some follow-up to the crime figures.

Clerk

A letter requesting permission to erect a flagpole for a St. George's flag. The council asked the GP committee to investigate this further and to bring recommendations to the council.

GP

A letter from BATPC with a questionnaire regarding the Quality Parish Scheme. The Clerk will obtain further information regarding the benefits for the next meeting.

Clerk

A letter from Mrs. S. Hounslow, Head of Eaton Bray Lower School, informing the PC of their success with gaining the approval of Beds. C.C. for their planned nursery building. The PC was asked to grant permission for parents to temporarily park cars in the neighbouring park car park, and to allow for a new pathway from the existing path next to the tennis clubhouse, through the hedge to the back of the school. Following a proposal by Cllr Windmill to agree to the new path in principle, seconded by Cllr Beal, and unanimously agreed, the Clerk was asked to write to give the council's approval in principle but to request further information concerning the expected use of the car park and the need for the new path.

Clerk.

7. MINUTES OF THE LAST PARISH MEETINGS:

It was proposed by Cllr. Marriage, seconded by Cllr Conner, and unanimously agreed to accept the minutes of the Parish Council Meeting of the 6th. November 2006 as a true and accurate record.

The Chairman signed the minutes.

8. DISTRICT & COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES:

County Councillor Brian Piggott addressed the council with an outline of some of the implications following from the recent White Paper on Local Government Reform, highlighting the moves towards a two-tier system across the county.

9. EATON BRAY & EDLESBOROUGH CARNIVAL 2007:

Cllr. Marriage made the suggestion for the PC to have a stall at the carnival to provide the opportunity to meet members of the public and Councillors from Edlesborough in an informal environment.

Cllr Beal proposed that the PC books a stall, seconded by Cllr Marriage and carried by eight votes with one abstention.

Clerk

10. G.P. REPORT

The minutes of the GP Committee meeting held on 16th Nov. 2006 were agreed by those present and then signed by Cllr Marriage as a true record.

Waste bin for School Lane Rec.

A proposal will be made by the GP Committee at the January meeting.

GP

Skateboarding.

This is being researched; the young residents making the request are to be invited to the next GP meeting.

Traffic management.

Following a report from Beds. Highways, the GP committee suggested that the PC reapplies for a school crossing on the High Street in six months. Cllr Beal has reported to the Highways dept. that one "school" warning sign exists and there should be another facing the opposite direction.

Data from the recent traffic surveys had been received and will be distributed to councillors for discussion at the January meeting.

Cllr. Marriage is to speak with County Cllr. Piggott regarding classification of local roads.

Clerk

Cllr Marriage

Allotments.

The GP committee proposed that markers should be placed showing the position of each plot. The Clerk was asked to research costs and feasibility and report to next meeting.

Concern was expressed about the standard of ground maintenance at the allotment site. Cllr Beal and the Clerk are to meet with the contractor.

Clerk

Cllr Beal &
Clerk

Cllr Heyland commented on the poor state of the track leading to the allotment site, Cllr Gallagher and the Clerk would investigate.

Cllr Gallagher
& Clerk

5. VILLAGE HALL REPORT:

Mr. Norman Leigh addressed the council on behalf of the Village Hall Committee, and stated that Phase One of the improvements was now completed. This had cost a total of £150k, £85k of which had been granted by the Parish Council.

As a result of the improvements, there had been an increase in bookings income, which together with careful management, reducing running costs by approx. 17%, had led to a much better financial position. Successful fundraising gave sufficient reserves for Phase Two of the improvement programme, which will provide upgraded rest room facilities with better disabled access. Phase Two will cost between £30k - £35k.

It was also reported that recent storms had caused considerable damage to the roof and other areas, but the hall was still "open for business". This damage would be the subject of an insurance claim.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Leigh for his report.

11. COMMITTEES:

The Chairman explained that there was a vacancy on the Finance Committee. It was agreed to accept Cllr Pearson's offer to join the committee with immediate effect. Dates were agreed for the Finance Committee to meet to consider the budget for 2007/08.

FC

The Chairman also expressed his view, agreed by the meeting, that there was a need for a new role, to manage public relations. Cllr Crace's offer to take this role was gratefully accepted.

12. FENCING ADJACENT TO R. OUZEL BRIDGE:

The Chairman opened the quotes for work to replace fencing, and advised the council of the contents.

It was proposed by Cllr Marriage, seconded by Cllr Heyland and agreed unanimously, to instruct Aaron Fencing to proceed with the work.

Clerk

13. CEMETERY:

Cllr Conner reported that there were many aspects to consider, research continues and it is intended bring a proposal to the next meeting.

Cllr Conner &
Clerk

14. PARISH COUNCIL WORKING AGREEMENT:

Proposals for amendments had been circulated to all Councillors:

Item 2. Change to:

The Clerk will normally be available during the following hours:

Monday and Tuesday 09.00 - 13.00

Friday 09.00 - 12.00

At other times a telephone message may be left. These messages will normally be picked up between 17.00 and 18.30. The Clerk will respond to non-urgent messages at the next time as above. Urgent messages will be acted upon without delay.

E-mails. The Clerk may be contacted using email, an email will be sent to acknowledge receipt. The Clerk's response will be as for telephone messages.

Item 8. Change to:

Where possible, information relating to matters for consideration, that are on the agenda and likely to result in the expenditure of more than £1000, will be made available to the Councillors prior to the PCM. The exception is that quotations received will not be made available until the PCM.

Item 11. Change to:

The Clerk is empowered to spend up to £500 in an emergency, ideally after consultation with the Chairman and one other Councillor.

With an amendment to Item 11 to read "...after consultation with the Chairman, or Vice Chairman and one other Councillor." it was agreed unanimously to adopt the changes. Proposed by Cllr Brand, seconded by Cllr Gallagher.

Clerk

15. COFFEE TAVERN ACCOUNTING:

The Clerk suggested that the new account for the Coffee Tavern be opened with Lloyds Bank, this was proposed by Cllr Heyland, seconded by Cllr Brand and agreed unanimously. The new account mandate will be prepared for the next meeting of the Trustees.

Clerk

16. CLERK:

It was agreed to add Cllr. M. Crace to the Lloyds bank account mandate and the necessary forms were completed.

The new allotment tenancy agreements have been distributed and signed, with the exception of two that the Clerk will chase.

The Clerk had received a request to erect a shed on plot 18 at The Meads, it was agreed to allow this.

The Clerk reported that the annual fire extinguisher tests had been carried out.

The council was advised that redecoration to the Coffee Tavern cottage was now complete, and a new bathroom suite installed. The next step is to purchase carpets and curtains.

Clerk

Clerk

Clerk

GP

17. OTHER MATTERS ARISING FROM NOVEMBER MEETING:

Cllr Brand informed the council of the reactions he has received from his neighbours in respect to his recent planning application, and gave a summary of his conversations with SBDC.

It was the opinion of the council that it could not comment as this is a personal matter, that the council must remain impartial, that it was not the business of the council to respond to letters sent to SBDC.

The Clerk was asked to seek guidance from BATPC.

Clerk

Cllr Marriage reported that the recent damage to the Coffee Tavern car park wall was being repaired.

18. NEXT AGENDA:

- Recycling bins.

19. PLANNING:

Two applications were considered:

SB-TP/06/1237 4 Jubilee Cottages Construction of vehicular crossover.

Approval was proposed by Cllr Marriage, seconded by Cllr Brand and carried with one objection.

SB-TP/06/1266 8 Bower Close Insertion of dormer window and removal of balcony.

Approval was proposed by Cllr Beal, seconded by Cllr Brand and carried with two votes against.

19. PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS:

It was unanimously agreed to pay the November accounts.

The meeting closed at 23.05.

Next meeting to be held at the Coffee Tavern on 8th January 2007 at 7.30pm.