



Toppesfield Parish Council

Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on Thursday 7th December 2017 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 7.30pm

17/189. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:

The following Councillors were in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Bull – Chairman
Councillor Alan Preston
Councillor Mike James
Councillor Andrea Chinery

Also in attendance:

3 members of the public attended
Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council
District Councillor Richard van Dulken

Apologies were received from:

Councillor Dave Dyson – Vice chairman
Councillor Linda Bowen
Councillor Paul Thompson

17/190. Declaration of Members' interests in agenda items:

No declarations of Members interests were made at this point.

17/191. Open Session – *opportunity for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council.*

The Chairman of the village hall committee reported that they have applied to the Community Initiative Fund for a grant of £10,600 towards the cost of new windows and doors for the Village Hall. The application has been considered and they were awarded a £5000 grant. The Village Hall are putting in £2000 from funds and asked the Parish Council for £5000 towards this project and it was reported that the suppliers can carry out the work during the February half term.

Councillor Bull stated it was fabulous to see the village hall open on the evening of the Christmas Tree lighting event and that crafts and hot chocolate were available for all. Also the lights outside the hall and the entrance looked good.

17/192. Minutes of the last Parish Council Meeting

The minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 2nd November 2017 were approved and signed as correct.

17/193. Matters Arising not on the agenda – for report only

17/193.1 The Network 5 meeting was postponed until February 2018 as attendance was very low – new date to be arranged.

17/193.2 All the feedback from the Christmas Tree lighting event has been positive and comments were that it was the best one yet. It was suggested if the carols could be held outside the pub as it was very crowded inside.

17/194 Actions from previous meeting:

17/194.1 Councillor Bull to speak to Paul Clark Printing re bill for reprinting last year's newsletter. This was discussed and it was agreed to pay half of the bill for the misprinted newsletter.

17/194.2 Kaaren Berry to update and circulate Asset register and circulate for comment – see agenda item 17/197.3.

17/195. Internal Practices and management for the Parish Council:

- 17/195.1 Dates for next year including the Annual Parish Meeting and Annual Parish Council Meeting. Dates for next year were confirmed as 11th January, 1st February, 1st March and 5th April 2018. The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on the 26th April and the Annual Parish Council Meeting on the 3rd May 2018.
A budget meeting for councillors will be held on the 4th January 2018.

17/196 Correspondence Received:

- 17/196.1 Essex Youth Bus – Essex County Council have decided to retain two Youth Buses and one is available to come to the village by prior arrangement. Anne Thrussell is willing to discuss the requirements for setting up a Youth Council – Kaaren Berry to arrange a meeting re this.
- 17/196.2 Victim Support – Volunteering in the New Year - fully accredited training course in Chelmsford To find out more email essexvolunteering@victimsupport.org.uk or call the Essex Service Delivery team on 01277 357557.
- 17/196.3 Countrywide Ground Maintenance Ltd – introduction letter & list of services available received.
- 17/196.4 Braintree District Council – Rough Sleeper Estimate November 2017. Councillors confirmed that they know of no rough sleepers within the parish at this time.
- 17/196.5 CPRE – Countryside Voice Publication – Winter edition received – Councillor Bull to read.
- 17/196.6 Essex Parish Partnership – Making the Links, EALC updates – circulated to all Councillors prior to meeting.
- 17/196.7 Essex Heritage Trust – War Memorial Trust Publication – Issue no 75 received – Councillor Bull to read.
- 17/196.8 Essex and Herts Air Ambulance – working with East London Textiles to fundraise. It was agreed not to place a Textile Recycling Bin in the village at this time.
- 17/196.9 Smaller Authorities Audit Appointments Ltd – Notification of external auditor appointments for the 2017/2018 financial year received.
- 17/196.10 Essex County Council – Essex Energy Switch campaign launches 5th December 2017– 13 February 2018. Posters to be placed in noticeboards and in the shop.
- 17/196.11 Braintree District Council - briefing note in relation to the former Wethersfield Airfield. Published on the website.
- 17/196.12 Braintree District Council - Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, and Tendring District Council have published for consultation Issues and Options Development Plan Documents and Sustainability Appraisal's for the proposed new garden communities in North Essex. Consultation documents can be viewed and comment on at; <http://braintree-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/negc> Consultation process will finish at 5 pm on the 22nd January 2018
- 17/196.13 RCCE – Essex Warbler – November Edition received – circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting.
- 17/196.14 Mid Essex Clinical Commissioning Group - The Mid and South Essex STP consultation - Full details of the consultation proposals can be found at www.nhsmidandsouthessex.co.uk, The consultation runs until 9th March 2018.

17/197. Financial Accounts:

- 17/197.1 To receive the Clerk's Report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval .The report was received and payments discussed. The payments were approved – see appendix A.
- 17/197.2 Village Hall Insurance – Councillor Bull reported that the Village Hall deeds state that the Parish Council are to pay the insurance for the village hall. This was discussed and it was agreed to look into paying the buildings insurance only.
- 17/197.3 Asset Register – this was circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. This was discussed and agreed to publish on the website.
- 17/197.4 Precept, projects for next year and funding – this will be discussed at a budget meeting to be held on the 4th January 2018 for presentation at the Parish Council meeting on the 11th January 2018.

17/198 Highways:

- 17/198.1 Footpath 51 – Information received re making a Schedule 14 (Wildlife and Countryside Act) Claim for the cut through to become a Public Right of Way under the 20 year rule – Councillor Preston and Kaaren Berry to look into.
- 17/198.2 Various Road Closures from 7th December 2017 received.

17/199 Planning:

Application No:	Description	Location	Action
17/02042/VAR	Application for variation of Condition 5 of approved application 17/00458/FUL – Amendment to extend opening hours	Bradfields, Harrow Hill, Toppesfield CO9 4LX	Comments to Braintree District Council by 19 th December 2017
17/02083/NMA	Application for a non-material amendment following grant of planning permission 17/00458/FUL (Demolition of outbuilding and erection of garages and store facilities for agricultural enterprise including ancillary works) Internal layout configuration, window and door revisions.	Bradfields, Harrow Hill, Toppesfield CO9 4LX	Information only – due to the type of application comments are not sort by Braintree District Council – details of the application are displayed on the District Councils website.
17/02074/FUL & 17/02075/LBC	Erection of 2 bay garage to replace the existing asbestos garage	1 Stambourne Road Toppesfield CO9 4DG	Comments to Braintree District Council by 25 th December 2017
17/02067/FUL	Erection of two storey rear extension	4 The Street Toppesfield CO9 4DJ	Comments to Braintree District Council by 1 st January 2018

The above planning applications were discussed and no objections were raised regarding these applications.

17/200 Parish Council Goal – ‘Love where you live’

- 17/200.1 Neighbourhood Watch Programme Update – Councillor Preston reported the new ‘No Cold Calling’ window stickers have been received which can be included in the next newsletter.
- 17/200.2 Community Payback Team – Report on November & Proposed Plan for December - no report available.
- 17/200.3 Update on bench from Thelma Bond – ongoing.
- 17/200.4 Update on Gainsford End Pump Project – Councillor Preston confirmed this is slowly progressing.
- 17/200.5 Allotments in Toppesfield – Councillor Thompson to report at the next meeting.
- 17/200.6 Braintree District Council – Open space action plan - amendments. These were agreed as new swings required for the Gainsford End playing field and new equipment for older children at Toppesfield playing field.
- 17/200.7 Playing Field Bins – It was stated a new small post mounted bin is to be purchased and installed.
- 17/200.8 Maintenance of the Pavilion – Councillor Thompson to report at the next meeting.
- 17/200.9 Channel Sweeping Dates – 2017/2018 as follows:

Gainsford End	1/2 Day	FRI	08-Dec-17	THU	15-Mar-18	WED	20-Jun-18	THU	20-Sep-18
Toppesfield	1/2 Day	THU	07-Dec-17	WED	14-Mar-18	TUE	19-Jun-18	WED	19-Sep-18

17/201. Parish Council Goal – ‘Bringing the Community Together’

- 17/201.1 Update on Christmas Lunch planning for our older residents – Councillor Preston confirmed that so far 48 people are attending and donations from individuals and organisations have been received towards the event.
- 17/201.2 Village Hall Management Committee Update – the Chair of the village hall committee sent in a report which was read out - see Appendix B.
- 17/201.3 Update on Little Chestnuts Pre-School – Councillor Chinery confirmed more children will be attending and numbers by April will be up to 30.
- 17/201.4 Update on Golden Chestnuts activities for November/December 2017 – no report available.
- 17/201.5 Update on St. Margaret’s School – Councillor Chinery reported that the school are wanted to be more involved in the community and a small choir attended and sung at the Christmas event.

17/202. Parish Council Goal – ‘Protecting our Heritage and Planning for the Future’

There were no items discussed under this heading.

17/203. Information exchange / November and December Parish Surgery / Items for the next agenda
Councillor Preston reported that a resident has offered to organise a CPR training session – this was discussed and Councillor Preston to progress.
There was nothing to report from the last Parish Surgeries.

17/204. Date of the next meeting:

The next Parish Council Meeting is scheduled be held on 11th January 2018 at 7.30pm at Toppesfield Village Hall. With a budget meeting for councillors to be held on the 4th January 2018.

17/205. Close

The meeting closed at 9.45pm.

Signed:

Dated:

Action Summary:

Kaaren Berry to arrange a meeting with Anne Thrussell re Youth Council.

Councillor Preston and Kaaren Berry to look into claiming the cut through from Camoise Close to the Church as a Public Right of Way.

Councillor Preston to looking into CPR training sessions.

Appendix A

Accounts – 7 December 2017		£	£	
National Savings Deposit Account:				
Balance as at 1st January 2017		<u>£2,594.44</u>		
Community Account				
Balance as at 30 November 2017			<u>£13,912.19</u>	
Subtotal:		<u>£2,594.44</u>		
All previous issued cheques cashed balance should be			<u>£13,431.22</u>	
Income Received (Included in above balance)				
Payments to be approved:				
Date of invoice			Chq No:	Unrecoverable VAT
13.11.17	Paul Chinery - Verge Cuting		101788	£570.00 £0.00
04.12.17	Toppesfield Village Hall Committee - Quarterly invoice & meeting charges		101789	£293.50 £0.00
10.11.17	B Sheldrake - Hanging Baskets for the Pumphouse		101790	£50.00 £0.00
Various	S Sheldrake - Christmas event		101791	£459.50 £0.00
30.11.17	K. Berry - November Wages		107787	£272.18 £0.00
				<u>£1,645.18</u>
04.12.17	Bank Charges will be deducted on 4th December 2017			£5.00 £0.00
Balance		<u>£2,594.44</u>		<u>£11,781.04</u>
Last bank statement received up to 30th November 2017				

Appendix B

Toppesfield Village Hall Report to The Parish Council. Thursday 2nd December 2017

We were pleased to open the Village Hall on the evening of the Tree Lighting Ceremony 2nd December. There was a steady number of young people playing, doing craft activities and enjoying hot chocolate and marshmallows. With an outdoor socket installed and some new decorative Christmas lights for both inside and out we were ready to take an active part and have a presence on that special village evening.

We have had a new outside entrance light installed. This was necessary as the previous one was irreparable. It is a legal requirement to have safe entrance lighting.

We are selling raffle tickets for our Christmas Hamper. All proceeds will go to the ongoing maintenance of the hall.

Unfortunately we have not heard about the grant we applied for and have started to consider other funding routes. The replacement of windows and doors is a priority. We have decided to replace the toilet heaters soon so that these areas are acceptable over the winter. However we do not like to have to spend money on what is a 'temporary fix' until we can afford better.

We have received the positive H and S report from Braintree Council. Their only advice to us is to continually monitor for vermin invasion (!) and also to check and ensure there is no asbestos. We instantly dealt with the aspect of vermin by writing in a policy and putting in a system for monitoring and dealing with it if it occurs in the future. Whilst we don't currently have a problem with any form of vermin, it certainly could arise. We cannot find any written assurance that there is no asbestos present and the Council will not accept 'we don't think there is'. It would be too easy to ignore these demands in a small village hall, but that cannot be how we can work in this age of litigation and compensation. We will be sure that we are fully accountable and doing the best we can for those who use our hall.

We have looked again at our booking system and slimmed it down aiming to make it available on email as well as in paper format. Over the last 6 months we have checked our income against costs and have agreed on the need to increase the fees to all for hiring the hall. We have informed all of our hirers with the following letter which gives a clear rationale for our reasons and an account of the past history of pricing.

Notification of changes in hire rates.

The hall fees have not risen since 1999, with a decrease in some fees in 2010, however inevitably our running costs have increased substantially. The Village Hall Management Committee reviewed the current overall financial position and reluctantly agreed that an increase in hire charges is unavoidable as our basic income just balances our outgoings allowing no flexibility for any contingencies or improvement.

The general common approach now is to charge an hourly rate for hall users. We believe this is a fairer system, allowing current and any new hirers to know exactly what their costs will be.

On researching other halls locally we found rates vary from £6 to £22 per hour, after much discussion and mindful of the facilities we can provide and the areas that need improvement, heating in particular, we agreed on a rate of £8 /hour.

Therefore from 1st January 2018 hall hire rates will be charged at a rate of £8 per hour.