

# **Toppesfield and Gainsford End Parish Council**

## **Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2011 At The Village Hall, Toppesfield at 8.00pm**

### **1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence:**

#### **The following Councillors were in attendance:**

Peter Moore - Chairman  
Andrew Bull – Vice Chairman  
Fran Laskowski  
Alan Collard

#### **Also in attendance:**

Kaaren Berry – Clerk to the Parish Council  
4 Members of the public

#### **Apologies were received from:**

Shaun Sheldrake  
John Levick  
Clare Condie  
Malcolm Braithwaite.

### **2. Open Session for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council:**

Steve Amerio provided an account sheet for the Royal Wedding Event expenses and £100 was returned to the parish council. 25 mugs remain unsold / unclaimed at present; these will be on sale at the Church Fete at Berwick Hall on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> June.

Steve Amerio also reported that the Toppesfield Football Club has signed for the 2012 season and has two new managers in Chris Syder and Rob Hartley and they are looking forward to a good year.

Ray Papworth queried as to why the parish council accounts are not available to view on the website. Peter explained that we are still waiting for information to be returned from Steve Marshall (former parish clerk). However the accountant has been contacted and we should be able to obtain copies from her. This was followed by discussions as to the legality of publishing the accounts and why they hadn't been obtained earlier. Peter reported that the accounts have all been prepared and approved but hard copies were held by Steve Marshall. Alan Collard stated that he has copies of some of the previous accounts and will forward these to Ray. Alan and Peter both will look back to see if they have a copy of 2009 / 2010 accounts. Kaaren is correlating information for the 2010 / 2011 accounts at the moment.

Ray also queried why the parish precept has increased by so much – The parish precept was always one of the lowest within the Braintree District and now it is the 8<sup>th</sup> highest out of 65 parishes, (this is based on a Band D property). Peter explained that the precept was increased as more monies were needed to meet the requirements of the parish and it did increase quite a bit two years ago as the parish was in the red – this is not the case now.

Ray also pointed out that the website shows out of date information – the contact details are still showing the former parish clerk and the dates of the parish meetings are incorrect. John Levick is aware of this but has not had time to update them at present but this will be updated as soon as possible.

Andrew Colley thanked the organisers of the royal wedding celebrations – he said it was a fantastic day and people were amazed at how Toppesfield and Gainsford End celebrated the day and the events held.

Andrew is looking to book “Quick Silver” on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2012 if the parish council are willing to support the event again this year. The cost would be £500, plus an additional £50 if they were to provide their own PA system if the village hall has not purchased one by then. They would also need accommodation – 1 single and 1 double – bringing total cost up to approximately £650. It was agreed to book them and Peter signed the contract – Andrew will now book them and further details will follow once the booking is confirmed.

### **3. Minutes of the last meeting:**

The minutes of the meetings held on 12<sup>th</sup> May and 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011 were approved and signed by the chairman as being an accurate record of the meetings.

The organisations reports will also be published in the newsletter.

### **4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:**

- Speed limit update – Peter has written to Olive and has asked for written confirmation as to where we are up to, a response has not been received yet.
- Publication of Accounts – this was dealt with during the open session.
- Broadband update – Peter Moore will speak to the Chairman of Stambourne Parish Council as they have been invited to ‘Essex Parishes Broadband implementation Conference’ in July to see if it would be beneficial to attend.
- Recreational Equipment – Andrew has a site meeting tomorrow with ‘Wicksteed’ to see what they recommend. Wicksteed will also help seek funding and plan the project. Peter has spoken to Essex County Council and Braintree District Council (BDC) regarding the area. Nick Day from BDC has agreed to send out ‘Elvin’ to assess the area, free of charge, in the next couple of weeks and lets us know his recommendations.

The safety aspect of the playing area needs to be dealt with as soon as possible. It was agreed to make the safety of the existing equipment a priority and then look at what ideally would be liked for the area. Gainsford End playing area also needs to be looked at.

Elvin’s report would probably be best in the short term and Wicksteeds in the long term. It was suggested that as the school holidays start towards the end of July could the works be carried out before then.

The gates leading to the playing field have been lifted off their hinges to allow the electricity board in for recent works. It was agreed that it would probably be best to put a combination lock on the gates rather than the key padlock that is there at present as this would allow easier access as the relevant people could be given the combination rather than having to obtain the key.

### **5. Actions from Previous Meeting:**

Peter requested that a log of all actions be held – Kaaren to set up and maintain the log.

**PM** to write to BT re broadband speeds – ongoing.

**KB** to write to Debbie Hilliard regarding broadband – written to and looking into ways of working together on this.

**AB** to write to Steve Marshall – written to but no response as yet.

**PM** to contact BDC re planning applications – Peter contacted Tessa Lambert and the response was that with 65 parishes they cannot keep up with producing plans for all parishes. These will be informed to the parish clerks by email only for consultation with

councillors. Peter reported that Great Yeldham parish clerk downloads the planning applications and presents these as a Power Point presentation at the parish meetings. It was felt that reviewing planning applications is better as a group discussion rather than individually looking at plans. In order to do this a projector and laptop would be needed. Peter may be able to supply a projector on a long term loan but a decision would need to be made regarding a laptop.

**AB** to do a spread sheet for Royal Wedding Celebration costs – information only provided just before the meeting so not actioned.

**PM** to contact highways re signs and hedges outside ‘Doghouse’ and flagpole by the pump – this has ‘Fallen between the cracks’ but highways were sending an officer out today to knock on the door – we await their findings. Planning permission to erect a flagpole by the pump is not needed but only the Union Jack, County flag, St Georges cross etc. can be flown – no advertising flags would be allowed. Need to look at location and size of pole.

**AC** to seek owner of hedge by Cust Hall and appropriate action – Alan contacted BDC and they have sent someone out but they need to refer back to maps they hold at their offices and will get back to Alan.

**AB** to speak to HMRC – it is a basic requirement and the accountant should be able to deal with this.

**KB** to write to Barclays re address changed – letter written and councillors signed this at the meeting.

**AB** to contact BDC re litter – Andrew contact them and bins have been emptied. Andrew suggested that he will publish the telephone number in the newsletter as anyone can call them to empty the bins.

## **6. Planning Issues:**

A letter has been received from IPC re overhead works from Bramford to Ipswich – Peter will ring and find out why we have received this as we are not in the consultation area.

Two applications for 1 Berkley Cottage, Stambourne Road had been received and circulated to all councillors – no objections / comments were made against these.

No other applications have been received at present.

## **7. Transport / Highways issues:**

There has been tree works carried out on the Causeway – thank you to Mr Clarke for carrying this out.

Kaaren has reported to Highways the state of Stambourne Road going out of Toppesfield from Grass Green Farm to the junction as requested by Mr Davison.

## **8. Financial Accounts:**

The clerks report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval was received and approved, (Appendix A).

It was questioned why there were two payments to Paul Clark printing for the newsletter – Andrew stated that one was the normal issue payment and the second was for a reprint as so many people wanted additional copies of the Royal Wedding Celebration issue. It was suggested that in future a small charge would be made for extra copies to help with the additional printing costs.

Peter asked if a list of all Village Plan expenses could also be kept.

## 9. Dates and Times of the coming years meetings:

It was agreed that the parish council meeting will be held on the first Thursday of each month and to start at 8pm.

7 <sup>th</sup> July 2011	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2011
1 <sup>st</sup> September 2011	6 <sup>th</sup> October 2011
3 <sup>rd</sup> November 2011	1 <sup>st</sup> December 2011
5 <sup>th</sup> January 2012	2 <sup>nd</sup> February 2012
1 <sup>st</sup> March 2012	5 <sup>th</sup> April 2012
3 <sup>rd</sup> May – Annual General Meeting	
10 <sup>th</sup> May – Annual Parish Meeting	

## 10. Any Other Business:

Andrew has had comments regarding the village plan questionnaire such as 'we were asked last year what we wanted fixed and the questionnaire is asking the same questions'. 'How much is this costing?' and general comments on the type of questions asked. Andrew stated that they have been negative vibes coming back to him about the questionnaire and we need to be prepared for some comeback. The RCCE are funding a lot of the cost so there is little cost to the Parish Council.

Alan and Fran reported on the allotments – Paul has been in touch with the Water Authority and a price has come back as just under £1000. Paul may be able to get someone to dig the trenches but they would have to be backfilled by the allotment holders. Fund raising would be needed to help pay for this but it was asked if the Parish Council would cover any shortfall. Fran is looking into setting up an association and if this happens they could then be able to look for grants and possibly get the water for free. It was also suggested that the allotments holders approach the shop for a grant. Peter agreed that the Parish Council would support this but other options need to be looked at first.

The Street Cleaning Agreement was signed by Peter. Kaaren to prepare an invoice to Braintree District Council and return the agreement together with the invoice.

Information has been received from ELAC with different training days coming up – Kaaren has the list if anyone is interested.

Projector – Peter and Andrew will look at the possibility of this.

Doctors Car Service – Peter has requested that something in writing from Margaret Dyson be obtained to confirm how this scheme will run.

Peter is interested in the local parishes working more closely together – Kaaren will contact Stambourne and Ridgewell regarding this.

Andrew reported that it is best practice to do look at doing the 'Village Design Statement' along side the village plan. The village design statement is to find out the aspirations how the village will look and development. The consensus from those present that we should wait until the village plan results are published.

It was agreed that the agendas should be published along with notice of the parish council meetings a week beforehand. Andrew will look at / revise the format of the agenda.

A report from Malcolm was received and he wished a village plan update to be recorded. Report as follows:

All questionnaires (main and Youth survey) are now circulated for completion by 30th June and collection organised over weekend 2/3 July. The next meeting of the steering group is on 12th July at 8.00 pm in The Green Man and will focus on assembling the responses for analysis by Warwick. Results will be available by early September. Consultation with other

stakeholders (church, school, village hall, play group, other clubs, etc has begun for collection of comments in September. Other parties, external to T&GE but with interests within the Parish, are being approached for comment or with their own questionnaire to complete.

I have the invoice from Paul Clark Printers for payment (£295) for printing the questionnaires, but await invoices from Warwick for formatting the questionnaire and printing the Youth Survey. (Approx £125). Fortunately, I have been informed that our application for £2,000 has been granted by RCCE and the cheque will be sent to the PC by end June. This is to cover analyses (approx. £1,000) and printing of the Plan. Graham Berry has volunteered to design the final Village Plan document at no cost. This will leave us approx. £1,000 for printing, but we may ask the PC for a contribution when the final bills come in (June 2012).

On the whole, residents seem happy with the process and reaction to the questionnaire seems positive. Most people seem aware that the VP process is underway and consultations are taking place. There is still a "no change" concept amongst some, but awareness that change is inevitable over the next 15 years seems to be spreading and that the PC will have to manage it. The purpose of the VP is to inform this management process.

### **11. Date of Next Meeting and Close:**

The next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2011 at 8.00pm, at the Village Hall. The meeting was closed at 9.50pm.

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Chairman

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Date

### **Action Summary:**

**Alan Collard and Peter Moore to look for previous years accounts to be published on the website / emailed to Ray Papworth.**

**John Levick to update the website – especially contact details and meeting dates.**

**Peter Moore to contact Stambourne PC chairman re Broadband Conference in July.**

**Kaaren to set up and maintain a log of all actions.**

**All councillors to look at location and sizing of flagpole.**

**Peter Moore to ring IPC re overhead works outside our parish**

**Kaaren Berry to speak to Margaret Dyson re Doctors Car Service.**

**Kaaren Berry to contact Stambourne and Ridgewell Parish Clerks.**

**Andrew Bull to look at / revise the format of the agenda.**