

Toppesfield and Gainsford End Parish Council

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 3 November 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
Clare Condie
Alan Collard

Also in attendance:

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

Apologies were received from:

Fran Laskowski
John Levick

2. Open Session for members of the Parish to address the Parish Council, including Village Plan update:

A parish member asked for an update on the recreational area in Toppesfield – the chairman explained that as a short term fix new swings and safety matting and a refurbishment of the slide is being progressed for Toppesfield and in Gainsford End the swings would be repainted and the surfacing addressed. This will hopefully be completed by early next year. The next stage to upgrading both recreational areas would be part of the village plan. It was asked who was responsible for the grounds in Gainsford End and it was reported that a post with a lock has been placed at the entrance which could make access difficult. Also the grass has not been properly cut and there is barb wire down the end of the area which could be hazardous. The chairman will look at the area regarding these issues.

A member of the village hall committee asked why did formalize costing's have to be presented before a decision was made to support the Village Hall 50th celebrations. The chairman explained that it is parishioner's money and therefore the parish council needs to understand the costs of the event and the position of the village hall before a final decision could be made. Discussions followed as to the reasons why this was needed and that the event could have been cancelled if the village hall committee had to wait for a final decision at this meeting as it would have been too late to book entertainment etc. It was commented that the request could have been made earlier in the year when the event was first being planned to avoid this situation. Funding for the Village Hall 50th Celebrations has been sourced from elsewhere. The chairman reiterated that the parish council did very much support this event, however, it is the Parish Councils absolute duty to Justify every penny it spend of the Village precept and therefore will always require a full understanding of any requested funding.

Going forward on this matter it was agreed that if financial support is being sort from the Parish Council towards activities within the village a budget / business plan would need to be presented by any organisation seeking support

A parish member stated that the link the homepage of the website to the accounts is not working – Kaaren to look at this. It was queried why the admin costs were high compared to the previous year and could more of a breakdown be given. The chairman explained that this was due to a back pay of the previous clerks wages and includes things such as the newsletter

and website cost amongst others. It was also explained that we are now breaking down the expenses in greater detail and this will show in next year's accounts.

A resident asked who the village hall committee is accountable to – it was explained that they are responsible to its trustees who are the management committee. If there is a default in the village hall committee then the hall and responsibilities fall back to the parish council. There is a parish council representative on the village hall committee who should report back to the parish council but this is not happening as it should do, therefore the parish council do not fully understand the position of the village hall. A greater understanding between the groups needs to be achieved.

It was then questioned who the Village Shop is accountable – Alan collard explained that they are accountable to their shareholders.

It was also asked when the grass is cut around the parish sign in Gainsford End, as Malcolm Braithwaite has agreed to keep the area cut once it has been grounded. It was explained that the grass cutting usually happens between March and September but a more formal request has been made to the person who carries out the work as to the areas cut and the frequency of the cuttings. Areas in Toppesfield and Gainsford end to be identified for upkeep / maintenance with a lawnmower etc. rather than a vehicle pulled mower.

Previously Malcolm has mentioned the state of the road in Mallows Lane and following the reporting of this one hole was filled in but no further repairs were made. Due to the deterioration of the road Malcolm has contacted Essex County Council again and the case has been re-opened. Malcolm has requested if 'the weight of the parish council be put behind the request for the repair'. Contact will be made to Essex County Council by the parish council.

Village Plan update: - a report 'Actions proposed for the Village Plan' will be published in the next parish magazine. All information is available on the parish council website – interpretation of the questionnaires, minutes etc. The report was handed out at the meeting and Malcolm went through it as a quick overview and raised several points that will need consideration.

Malcolm asked the parish council for permission for the steering group to find out where the parish land is, the assets of the parish council and the way organisations are accountable to the parish council and how they are funded as part of the village plan progress.

It was noted that the Village Plan Group ('Vantage') was established and mandated by the Parish Council to develop a Plan for the Parish. As part of this exercise, it is understood that Vantage would need to undertake a survey of all community and Parish owned and controlled assets (including buildings, land etc.)'.

It was suggested that the parish council should already have a register of assets – the Chairman agreed but due to historic problems and the changing ways of how things are documented things are not as they should be. A register can be produced but this will take some time. This will be progressed at the next meeting.

The launch of the village plan will be on the 1st July 2012. Data collection and justification is required for any grant / project funding which will need to be sorted to finance some of the projects resulting from the village plan.

Malcolm has requested a statement of accounts of monies spent from the grant funding for the village plan to date. Kaaren to compile account sheets for village plan group.

3. Minutes of the last meeting:

The minutes of the meetings held on 6th October 2011 were approved and signed by the chair as being an accurate record of the meetings.

4. Matters Arising from the Minutes:

Recreational Equipment – Clare has researched funding and there are several grant providers that could be approached. Clare and Andrew will complete application forms for the ones that award smaller amounts to help with the short term project. The larger grant providers will be approached in conjunction with the village plan group once the final decision has been made to what is required in the recreational areas.

5. Actions from Previous Meeting:

- Clare Condie to contact Edible Essex re sourcing funding for the recreational areas as above.
- Fran Laskowski to finalise quotes for signs in the allotments – no progression.
- Andrew Bull to speak to Paul Clark Printing re costs for a 'No Fly Tipping' sign – Paul Clark can produce signs for the allotments, a budget of £20 was agreed for Andrew to progress this matter.
- Kaaren Berry to find out costing's of benches – brochures received, prices varying depending on size etc. A budget of up to £500 was agreed and a note will be placed in the parish magazine if anyone wishes to make a donation toward the bench. We feel that this would be a fitting memorial from the village to someone who played such an active role in village life.
- Kaaren to contact BALC re support before renewal of subscription –they are a small executive of councillors which have representation at Braintree District Council. They also appoint councillors within the membership to attend meetings ie the standard and highways committees. At present they are working on the local development framework strategy and the continuation of the parish support grant. The BALC ensure that Braintree District Council keep working with the parishes and continue consultation.
- Kaaren Berry to contact parish clerks re dates for Community Issues meetings – contact made regarding suggested dates of the first meeting. It has now been agreed that the first meeting will be held on 29th November at 8pm in the Village Hall.
- Clare Condie to ask Paul Thompson to purchase daffodil bulbs and arrange date for working party – working party has been arranged for the 13th November 2011 at 9.30am and bulbs have been purchased.
- Kaaren to organise date for Emergency Life Support evening several dates were proposed but agreed upon 8th December 2011, 7pm at the village hall. Additional sessions can be run if needed. Andrew to place information in the parish magazine.
- P3 scheme – Adam Jenkins from Essex County Council will attend our next parish council meeting to give a brief introduction to the scheme and what can be achieved from it.

6. Planning Issues:

33 The Causeway – no objections were made to this application.

7. Transport / Highways issues:

Speed limit update: no further update available – Peter Moore to follow up.

Andrew has had several communications with Essex County Council regarding an enquiry about articulated lorries using Toppesfield Road and related usage within the parish. After speaking with two departments it would appear that there is nothing either department can do as it is not a noise issue and all HGV/haulage type operations are licensed with VOSA and as such are not able to address this matter further.

8. Financial Accounts:

- The clerks report indicating receipts and payments requiring approval was received and approved, (Appendix A). The payment for Paul Clark printing was for the posters for the Red Barrows Zombie walk – this was a great success and turnout exceeded expectations.
- Barclays – progression re change of details – Alan has not been able to make any headway on this. Peter Moore to follow up
- Village Hall 50th anniversary celebrations – this was discussed earlier in the meeting.

9. Correspondence:

- Essex County Councils schools administration consultation – no comments / objections were raised to this.
- Mi Community Scheme – posters have been put up and I have a prospectus if anyone is interested.
- RCCE Community led Planning Network Event – on 12th November 2011 – Kaaren to find out if this related to village plan issues or planning issues.
- Braintree District Council – Local Highways panel – reserve list projects. Information regarding a footpath alongside The Causeway is need – Andrew will respond to this letter.
- Braintree District Council – Winter Salt Scheme: information received the partnership scheme; risk assessments, Q and A sheet, guide for clearing snow and manual handling.
- EALC – ‘Simply Essex’ will publish celebration events coming up in villages. County update is available if anyone wishes to read it, the 2012 training calendar and information on retirement payments and data transparency.

10. Any Other Business:

- Working Party – daffodils – this has been arranged for 13th November 2011 at 9.30am.
- Christmas events – the tree lighting celebrations will be on the 3rd December 2011, Shaun to arrange fireworks and tree. Andrew will arrange the food/refreshments. A budget of up to £500 was agreed for all the Christmas Event costs. A detailed budget will be presented at the next Council meeting
- Andrew also suggested that the parish council do a lunch for the old aged pensioners of the village prior to Christmas – details to be arranged.
- Jubilee celebrations – an article will be put into the newsletter for a working party to be formed and progress form there.

Alan commented that all parish councillors need to be fully aware of the village plan results and perhaps start think about funding for various projects that will be coming up.

Funding day training session – both Alan Collard and Clare Condie have agreed to attend this training session on 10th November 2011 run by the EALC.

11. Date and Time of the next meeting:

The next parish council meeting will be held on Thursday 1st December 2011 at 8.00pm, at the Village Hall

12. Close:

The meeting was closed at 10.50pm.

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Chairman

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Date

Action Summary:

Peter Moore to look at the recreational area in Gainsford End re the locked post, grass and barb wire.

Kaaren Berry to look into why link to accounts on home page of website is not working. Contact to be made to Essex County Council by the parish council.

Areas in Toppesfield and Gainsford End to be identified for upkeep / maintenance with a lawnmower etc.

All councillors to collect information for the assets register for the next parish council meeting.

Kaaren Berry to compile account sheet for village plan expenses.

Andrew Bull to progress 'No fly Tipping' signs for allotments.

Kaaren Berry form an agenda and email round for comments / additions.

Kaaren Berry to progress Emergency Life support evening.

Peter Moore to follow up any speed limit update.

Peter Moore to contact Barclays again re change of details.

Andrew Bull to write to BDC re The Causeway footpath.

Appendix A

Accounts – 03 November 2011

National Savings Deposit Account:	£	£
Balance as at 12 July 2010	2498.26	
Community Account Statement Balance as at 31 August 2011		9711.42
Subtotal:		<u>9711.42</u>

If all previously issued cheques cashed / receipts cleared balance should be;

	Total	<u>18504.63</u>
Credits: VAT repayment -01/04/10 – 31/0311		1407.29

Payments to be approved:

Chq No:		
1308	Paul Clark - posters	25.00
1309	mh-p - VP docs & minutes and accounts	54.00
1310	The Green Man – wine for VP meeting	153.41
1311	E.on – changing rooms (meter read)	6.29
1312	K.Berry – postage, stationery, bulb & starter for pc office	25.52
1313	K. Berry – wages – October	198.47
		<u>462.69</u>

Balance	<u>2498.26</u>	<u>19449.23</u>
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Last bank statement received up to 31st August 2011.