

IWADE PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AND MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Held on Wednesday 9th May, 2012

Present: Cllr. S. Plumb Clerk, Lynda Fisher
Cllr. R. Jones Community Warden
Cllr. J. Gregory County Cllr. M. Whiting
Cllr. T. Avron-Cotton 10 Parishioners
Cllr. S. Harris
Cllr. P. Hyde

ANNUAL MEETING

1. Election of Chairman, and upon election signing of Acceptance of Office

Nominated by Cllr. Gregory and seconded by Cllr. Jones, Cllr. Stephen Plumb was elected as Chairman and duly signed the Acceptance of Office.

2. Election of the Vice-Chairman and upon election signing of Acceptance of Office

Nominated by Cllr. Plumb and seconded by Cllr. Gregory, Cllr. Jones was elected as Vice-chair and duly signed the Acceptance of Office.

3. Election of Members of Committees and Other Bodies

The Finance and Planning Committees, Kent Association of Local Councils, Parks and Greens and Village Hall Committee need representatives. Due to the late arrival of Members this item deferred until the next meeting.

MONTHLY MEETING

4. Welcome and Apologies

The Chairman welcomed Parishioners to the meeting. Apologies were received from Cllrs Hunt and Phillips and the PCSO.

5. Declarations of Interest - None

6. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

Proposed by Cllr. Avron-Cotton and seconded by Cllr. Harris, the Minutes of the monthly meeting held on the 11th April, 2012, were agreed by Members and signed as a true transcript.

Proposed by Cllr. Plumb, the Minutes of the Planning meeting held on the 12th April, 2012, were agreed by Members and signed as a true transcript.

7. Matters Arising from the Minutes

Village Park/Pond/Environment Agency – The Iwade Nature and Conservation Group has now been set up and the group has received £50 from a local resident; they are looking at using the money to join the BTCV which will open up more funding to them. Swale Council have agreed to change the grass cutting regime around the orchard to leave longer grass for wildlife and are allowing the group to plant wildflowers to attract insects to the area, install bug houses etc. The grass next to the stream is going to be left longer on the North side to allow extra habitat for the water voles.

A second meeting is taking place with the Environment Agency this month to discuss further arrangements for the pond cleaning/dipping day.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee Trees – The Chairman and Clerk visited a local company to get ideas for a plaque made out of stone; unfortunately the cost could prove to be exorbitant.

The Chairman put forward an alternative site for the trees – on the corner of Woodpecker Drive/Ferry Road, adjacent to the new bus shelter. The trees would be more visible in this area and a commemoration plaque could be sited on the shelter. Clerk to contact KCC Highways, who are responsible for grass verges, to ascertain the feasibility of this suggestion.

Action: Clerk

Iwade Medical Centre – Parishioners came forward in person and on 'Iwade does Facebook' expressing concern at the level and quality of service provided by the Medical Centre. The NHS Trust was aware of some of the problems and because of the outcry held a public meeting to discuss what is going on at the Centre.

The current providers have terminated their contract and the Trust is looking at alternatives. There have been problems with booking appointments because of staff shortages; hopefully by now they should have a full complement of Doctors. The current telephone system does not give an engaged tone when the Receptionist is taking a call and patients get the impression that no-one is answering the calls; a new system is shortly being installed which will remedy this situation.

Replacement of Old Parish Lighting – Deferred until the June meeting.

D.S. Smith Community involvement; Pond Dipping Station – Cllr. Hunt to put together a proposal for a pond dipping platform and submit details to D.S. Smith to see if they are willing to fund the project. Swale Borough Council's Green Spaces Officer is agreeable to the installation of a platform, but has requested that he be consulted on the design, durability and materials for this furniture.

Action: Cllr. Hunt

Youth Council – It had been brought to Members' attention that there are a number of successful Youth Councils within this country, where young people work very successfully together. This subject was raised at the last meeting because teenagers within the village had commented that there was 'nothing for them to do in Iwade'. Regretfully none of these youths

attended the meeting and the Youth Council can only move forward if it comes from the young people themselves. Members kept the item on tonight's Agenda in the hope that the youths might attend (none) and can now only hope that people within the community will encourage them to come forward.

8. Visitors/Public Time

Guest Speaker – Peter Blandon, Chairman of Swale Committee, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) – The Chairman welcomed Peter to the meeting and asked him to outline what is likely to be CPRE's response to Swale's Core Strategy.

He opened by stating that Swale Borough Council are required to produce plans for housing, employment and other business over the next 20 years; the 2006 Plan is due for review and they are building on that Plan.

CPRE are concerned at the housing targets and housing land; this is land which is set aside but not given planning permission. Within Iwade two sites already have permission – the 'Fruit and Produce' site (adjacent to the 'Woolpack's' car park) and land at Coleshall Farm. There are in addition two new sites; land to the south-east and land to the east of Iwade; two Greenfield sites phased in around 2020. CPRE argue that there is no reason to use Greenfield land for housing. This essentially means that 756 houses are in the pipeline for development over the next 20 years. In Swale overall they are looking for 13,500 houses for the period 2006 to 2031, an increase of 25-35%.

Employment land would provide jobs for 10,650 people; CPRE has used the Office of National Statistics figures to compare with Swale's figures and in reality only 7500 houses are needed, not the figure that Swale quotes – CPRE agrees with the Office of National Statistics.

Furthermore there is nothing in the Plan regarding new schools and nothing is being done as regards Junction 5 of the M2.

County Cllr. Mike Whiting queried the two new sites mentioned by Peter, as he was not aware of these. Chairman advised that this matter has already been taken up with Borough Cllr. Alan Willicombe, who has referred the Clerk to Brian Planner at Swale Borough Council. The Clerk advised that she has received an e-mail from Brian Planner stating that he has passed the query to James Freeman, Head of Planning, asking for a response to be sent to her.

The Chairman thanked Peter for outlining CPRE's observations on the Core Strategy 'Bearing Fruits' Consultation.

Parishioners – A resident raised her concern at the number of cars parking on pavements in her area. Members agreed with her concerns, but commented that where the roads are so narrow in places, when cars are parked properly at times it can be difficult for emergency vehicles to gain access. If residents use the parking spaces/driveways allocated this helps to alleviate the problem.

The Chairman advised that an article on parking in the village will be appearing in the next edition of the 'Iwade Observer'.

County Councillor and Borough Councillors – County Cllr. Mike Whiting attended the official opening of the Iwade Allotments; he wished to congratulate all the people who hold allotments and was astonished at the community support and work undertaken; he feels it is a great asset.

He has invited the Youth Club to speak to the Swale Youth Advisory Group and is still pushing for the 20 m.p.h. speed limits throughout the village.

Neighbourhood Watch and the Police are introducing ‘No Cold Calling Zones’ – if people try and sell something at the door, this can be reported.

Temp. Community Warden (Nick Mayatt)/PCSO – Warden’s report was circulated and noted by Members. Nick reported that a new resident has got four white vans, which are being parked around the area; he will talk to the Management Committee regarding this.

The new PCSO could not attend due to a hospital appointment.

9. Finance

Insurance – Clerk advised that she has obtained three quotations, addition to the renewal notice from the existing Insurer Aon (£1941.62p): Came & Co. (Aviva) - £1074.29p; Eclipse (W.R. Berkley Insurance) - £1484.37p and Zurich Municipal Insurance Co. - £1313.88p. Proposed by Cllr. Jones and seconded by Cllr. Hyde that Came & Co (Aviva) is selected to provide insurance cover for the Parish Council. *Action: Clerk*

Prettiest Garden in the Village Competition – Agreed not to continue with the competition, due to a very low number of entries last year.

Village Hall – As Cllr. Hunt was unable to attend tonight, it was agreed to defer this item and place on the Agenda for the June meeting. *Action: Cllr. Hunt*

Clerk’s Hours – Clerk withdrew from the meeting. She had been requested to submit details of work and hours for the period covering the past month; as a result of this it was proposed by Cllr. Plumb and seconded by Cllr. Gregory that her hours be increased by 20% (2 hours extra per week). It was also proposed that her hours be reviewed again at the end of the year, during the period when the budget is being set for the financial year 2013/14.

Paper Shredder – Clerk explained that she had quite a large amount of confidential records to safely dispose of, and was seeking the Council’s approval to purchase an office shredder as per the details circulated. It was agreed that the Clerk contact Swale Borough Council to see if they provide a service for the disposal of confidential waste. *Action: Clerk*

Plaque – Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Celebration – decision deferred, see second item under ‘Matters Arising from the Minutes’ above.

Precept 2012/13 – Clerk reported that the first instalment of £16,060 (this amount includes half of the Lighting grant) has been received from Swale Borough Council.

2011/2012 Audit – The Balance Sheet, Bank Reconciliation and Variations for the financial year 2011/12 were submitted to the Parish Council and approved by Members – the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer then signed and dated the documents.

The Annual Return for the year ending 31st March, 2012 was submitted to the Parish Council. It was agreed that section 1, statement of accounts, be approved. Section 2, Annual governance statement, was perused and completed satisfactory. The Council being in agreement, both sections were signed by the Chairman and Responsible Financial Officer. The Annual Return and the above documents will now be submitted to the Audit Commission. *Action: Clerk*

Bus Shelter – Village Park – The Chairman opened the meeting and invited comments from Parishioners. Due to the recent extreme weather (heavy rain and gusty westerly winds) Parishioners were not happy with the new shelter; the seat became wet and rain came in through the side openings. The Chairman explained that the decision had been made by the Council not to install glass because of vandalism, nor to board up the openings due to safety at night-time. The Chairman closed the special public session and the Council meeting resumed.

Due to concerns raised by Parishioners, the Clerk was instructed to approach Littlethorpes, the manufacturers, to ascertain the cost of installing Polycarbonate panes in the shelter.

Action: Clerk

Village Clean up 2012 – Members decided to defer the annual clean-up at the present time, but to look towards carrying this out later in the year, around autumn. *Action: Cllr. Hyde*

Cheques signed at this meeting:

Date	Cheque	Details	Amount
09.05.12	1528	PFL Electrical Ltd.	£426.90p
09.05.12	1529	Stiddard Kent Ltd.	£132.00p
09.05.12	1530	Wages	£447.40p
09.05.12	1531	K.A.L.C.	£798.35p
09.05.12	1532	L. Fisher	£26.75p
09.05.12	1533	Miss J. Giles	£25.00p
09.05.12	1534	Broker Network Limited	£1074.29p
09.05.12	1535	David Buckett	£212.40p
Eight cheques in total			

10. Core Strategy Meeting

Overall response - Members agreed to include the following concerns in the Parish Council's response:

- There is an apparent absence in the plan for new employment opportunities, in particular for the high number of Swale residents who currently find themselves out of work.
- The Strategy contains no proposals for a new hospital or new schools (particularly Secondary), in light of the anticipated increase in population in the area due to the new housing.

- Lack of details relating to improved road and public transport infrastructure to support the high number of proposed houses.
- What plans will be put in place to try to solve the water shortage problems in the South East, and the impact that the proposed new housing will have on this escalating problem?
- The Parish Council is particularly concerned at the use of Greenfield sites for housing and would wish to see brownfield sites taking preference. With Government pressure to build more and more housing and the recent change to Planning; Councillors believe that developers will push to build on Greenfield sites (the easy option) and brownfield sites will be left to stand idle.

2010-11 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment; Members agreed to mention concern relating to a particular area of land earmarked in Iwade, reference SW/123, and seeking the Borough Council's written assurance that the site referred to as SW/123, will be removed from the SHLAA/Core Strategy.

Gypsy and Travellers' Pitch Numbers Consultation, which is included in the 'Bearing Fruits' consultation, Members agreed the following response:

Iwade Parish Council acknowledges that Swale Borough Council have to meet National policy for the provision of Gypsy & traveller sites, and that EU requirement and Human Rights are to be adhered to.

Swale Borough Council offers three Options with regards to the potential number of pitches (between 41 and 112 pitches [33 already provided since 2006 the base year). North West Sittingbourne being a 'named' area. Therefore we are assuming that Iwade will continue to be seen as an area suitable/desirable for further pitches. Iwade Parish Council wants to ensure that if any sites are allocated in Iwade that it is an appropriate number, and that the number of pitches per site is restricted and not allowed to 'grow'.

Iwade Parish Council agrees with Swale Borough Council premise that it is desirable to make strategic provision, so to reduce the likelihood of unauthorised encampments.

We agree that it would be in 'everyone's' interest if pitches were to be identified, in the strategic plan.

Once these sites are identified we assume that future planning applications for pitches in areas which are not one of these 'identified' sites would not be looked upon favourably/refused? In recent months, Iwade Parish Council has received a number of applications from the Gypsy and Traveller Community. They seem to fall into two broad categories:

1. Those who enter into the Planning process before carrying out any work on site, and who positively respond to suggestions/requirements which make up the application e.g. evidence that they are an authentic Gypsy family, and where required they have had an ecological survey undertaken etc.
2. Then there are those in a second category, who establish a site and then apply for retrospective planning permission (sometimes many years later). We assume again that

identified pitches in the strategic plan would seek to prevent this practice, and appropriate legal enforcement would take place against parties who act in this manner. We feel strongly that this is a practice that should be halted; particularly as people in other ethnic groups have to abide by the planning regulations.

11. Village Hall Updates

Clerk advised the outline planning permission has now been received for the site following no objections from Sport England regarding the proposals for the School Lane site.

12. Correspondence

Invitation to meeting with Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council re:

- **Bold Steps for Swale – A Local Prospectus of Services**
- **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**
- **Localisation of Council Tax Benefit and Cutting its costs by 10%**

These documents were circulated to all Members for information. The Chairman explained that many of the details have yet to be confirmed due waiting for clarification on certain parts of the Localism Act.

Core Strategy – Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Consultation – see comments under ‘Core Strategy’ item 10 above.

Kent County Council Consultation – Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocation Policy (response deadline 25th May) – Agreed Cllr. Plumb to respond to this in light of his research for the Core Strategy and Gypsy/Traveller pitches for Swale. *Action: Cllr. Plumb*

Consultation on Commissioning Plan for Education in Kent 2012-17 – deferred until the Parish Council meeting on the 9th June.

Kent County Council – Draft Kent Freight Action Plan – Members agreed to write supporting the draft response proposed by the Kent Association of Parish Councils.

Kent Forum Housing Strategy Refresh – Consultation Document - Members agreed to write supporting the draft response proposed by the Kent Association of Parish Councils.

Draft Recommendations on the new Electoral Arrangements for Swale Borough Council – The proposal for Ward boundary changes, to incorporate Iwade, Lower Halstow and Bobbing (Rural) were noted, as was the proposal for two Borough Councillors to represent this Ward in future.

13. Planning

SW/05/1477 - Change of Use to Long-Stay Caravan Site for Five Gypsy Families: Tiptree Farm School Lane, Iwade Sittingbourne, ME9 8QE – Clerk instructed to write objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- The Parish Council wishes to place on record its deep concern at the number of similar applications within close proximity to this area, and want assurance that the area of high landscape value and the strategic gap will be protected and not eaten away.
- Members are further concerned that this is yet another retrospective application.
- The site is 3Km from the shops and services in Iwade. The normal accepted distance within the Government's guidelines is 2Km. Although the planning officer stated back in 2005 that the site is only 1km from amenities etc the given information is now out of date. It states that some children attend Iwade School. The said children could easily have left Iwade School by now and if those children are now of secondary school age it would make the site considerably further away from the amenities required for the occupants
- There is no supporting evidence from the Gypsy Council that this family is registered as Gypsies/Travellers (*Circular 01/2006*)
- No ecology reports have been submitted with this application, this is necessary particularly as there is a Meta population of great crested newts in the ponds and other areas surrounding Iwade.

SW/12/0183 – Change of use of land for the siting of 2 mobile homes for 2 gypsy families with associated utility blocks, parking for vehicles including touring caravans, services & boundary fence; amended site layout, fence height and utility block materials: Land north of Plantation Lodge (known as Highview), School Lane, Iwade, Kent, ME9 8QH. – Members raised no objection to the amendments.

SW/12/0300 - Change of use from land adjoining farm complex to land for the use of placing 5 static mobile home units and 1 mobile caravan: Raspberry Hill Park Farm, Raspberry Hill Lane, Iwade, Kent, ME9 8SL. – Clerk instructed to write objecting to the proposal on the following grounds:

- Expressing deep concern at the number of similar applications within close proximity to this area, and seeking assurance that if granted this will not open the floodgate to similar development and that the SSSI/Ramsar site will be protected and not eaten away.
- Members are further concerned that this is yet another retrospective application, due to the history of the site and this is supported by evidence of work having been carried out.
- Requesting supporting evidence from the Gypsy Council that this family is registered as Gypsies/Travellers (*Circular 01/2006*)
- Seeking an ecology report, none have been submitted with this application, and pointing out that there is a Meta population of great crested newts in the ponds and other areas surrounding Iwade.
- As this site falls within the SSSI/Ramsar area the Parish Council feels that, as with other similar applications within the Parish boundary, an ecology report should be produced to assess the presence of any protected species.

- Any screening to the rear of the development, facing towards the Village of Iwade, should be sympathetic with the surrounding area – not 6m high close-board fencing as this will have a visual impact and be seen from the Village.
- Furthermore the Council seeks a condition that at no time will the site exceed 5 static homes and 1 mobile caravan.
- **SW/12/0503** - First floor side extension and single storey rear extension: 1 Evergreen Close, Iwade, ME9 8LU – Members raised no objection to this application.
- **SW/12/0508** - Conversion of existing detached garage to summerhouse/games room: 77 Stangate Drive, Iwade, Kent, ME9 8TQ – Members raised no objection to this application.

14. Next Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held on Wednesday 25^{3rd} May, 2012, commencing at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The next Monthly Meeting will be on Wednesday 13th June, commencing at 7.30 p.m. in the Village Hall.

The meeting closed at 10.35 p.m.