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SHOREHAM
PARISH
COUNCIL

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MINUTES of a MEETING of SHOREHAM PARISH COUNCIL
at St Marys Church, Woodlands on 2nd October 2019 from 7:30pm

Present: Jonathan Histed (in the Chair)
R Blamey, A Collins, S Hubble, B Jeffery, N Powell and M Sheward

Also Present: 3 members of the public

Clerk: Sarah Moon

Question Time:

1. Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hibbins and from District Councillors John Edwards-Winsor and Irene Roy and from County Councillor Roger Gough
2. There were no disclosures of interest.
3. The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 4th September 2019 (copies previously distributed) were received and signed by the Chairman.
4. **District/County Councillor Reports**
District Councillor
No District Councillors were present. However, District Cllr Irene Roy gave an update on the situation at Romney Street (see minute 7 below).
County Councillor
County Councillor Roger Gough was not present at the meeting however, the following report was read out by the Clerk in his absence.
 - "Romney Street. Simon Hawkins, Highways Steward and colleagues did at my request visit to assess continuing issues to do with the boundaries and encroachment onto the highway
 - Quality of roads in/ approaching the village. This was raised following an email from a resident that you forwarded to me. It's not wholly clear which roads are meant, and as far as I can see from the KCC website there are some pothole works due to be undertaken in Water Lane but not much sign of enquiries or jobs raised on outlying/ approach roads otherwise. However, following discussions with the Highways Steward, he and the Area Manager will be putting forward Station Road and parts of High Street for consideration in next year's pothole blitz – which, if the works required are extensive enough, could justify surface dressing works rather than just patching

- Broadband. I know that you plan to cover this at a future meeting, but George Chandler has kept me informed as to discussions with Suzanne re provision in the village, and we are likely to schedule a Well Hill meeting shortly
- 421 bus. As discussed at the last PC meeting, we (KCC) are looking to alternatives along the lines of the Big Conversation/ taxi-bus schemes etc. I am due to meet shortly with Robert Clark, one of our officers who leads on the Big Conversation, and the head of Public Transport, Phil Lightowler, is also giving it attention”.

5. **Chairman’s Report**

Walnut Tree Trust : The Chairman reported that he had received several communications from tenants of the Walnut Tree Cottages, which are to be sent to the Charity Commission. He also reported that he had requested valuation of the properties from a letting agent in Sevenoaks. One of the reasons that the Trust has given for selling the properties is that they have not been able to increase their income and an up to date valuation would prove this is not the case. The Trust’s plan to build three social housing units within the curtilage of the site would of course have a detrimental effect on both letting and sales valuations of the existing properties. The Chairman reported that he would be collating all correspondence from the tenants as well as the valuation then packaging it up to send it all to the Charity Commission. He also reported that a letter had been received from the Walnut Tree Trust acknowledging receipt of our letter and outlining once again what they plan to do. No members were in favour of the plan and the fact that money which had been available to maintain the properties has instead been spent on expensive professional fees needs to be questioned. The Trustees never sought help from the local community, despite there being several suitably qualified professionals whose advice could have been sought. The fact that the Charity Commission have granted the Trust a power of sale is disappointing but the Parish Council should explore the possibility to appeal this decision. Additionally, the fact that the Trust now has permission to sell the buildings does not actually mean that they should or must sell them. Indeed, perhaps there should be a campaign to prevent this happening. The Chairman also raised the question as to what would happen in the event of planning permission either for redevelopment of the barn or the building of the three new units being refused? There are also many questions surrounding the monies gained from sale of the properties and how and to whom exactly this would be distributed.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk write back to the Trustees requesting their presence at the next Parish Council meeting in order to open up dialogue.

It was RESOLVED that the Chairman request a copy of the current schedule form Charity Commission.

It was RESOLVED that the Chairman ask the tenants of the cottages whether they have received the new schedule.

It was RESOLVED that Cllr Hubble seek advice on what can be done if Trustees are seen not to be operating as directed under the terms of their appointment/charity schedule and what information for a charity should be in the public domain.

The Parish Council would like to see specific plans for expenditure as well as any likely beneficiaries of any proceeds in the event of a sale.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk find out from Sevenoaks District Council whether the entire site can be registered as an Asset of Community Value.

Timberden : The Chairman reported that he had spoken with Mr Joseph Muscat, who confirmed that on Friday he had completed the purchase of the disused barns at Timberden. Mr Muscat has not yet decided what his plans are for the barns although his motivation for buying them was that SDC were intending to sell them to a North London property developer. He feared this could bring trouble both for himself and for the village as a whole. Mr Muscat

stated that he has entered a ten year stewardship scheme on his own land for his cattle and is also grazing his herd on 50 hectares of land owned by the Kent Wildlife Trust. In the past year, he has experienced problems with sewage running in to the road and has paid for a drainage assessment to try and address this. He has also lost his prize bull, who became ill and died. Because of these set-backs, he has become mindful that a permanent presence is required on the site. It is therefore likely that he will be exploring once again the possibility of a erecting a dwelling somewhere on the site and would like to consult with the PC as to where this should be located.

6. **Report from the Clerk**

- The Clerk reported that she had attended the annual Clerk's Conference at Faversham.
- A table tennis tournament between the village school children and the Shoreham Over 60s Club will be held on Wednesday 13th November. The Chairman of SDC, Cllr John Edwards-Winser will also be attending. Following this event, the remainder of the funding due (£2500) in respect of the table will be paid to the Parish Council by the London Marathon Charitable Trust.
- The Clerk notified the Parish Council of a request from a film company to grant permission for filming at the Cross on 12th/13th October. The film company are making a programme for BBC4 about the history of the M25. It was RESOLVED that permission be granted for filming.
- The Clerk also reported that she had received correspondence asking when the silent soldier at the Cross was going to be removed. It was RESOLVED that the Clerk write to the British Legion asking them to remove the statue after Remembrance Sunday and to confirm that it may be reinstated each November.

7. **Kingsdown Meadow**

The main issue with the redevelopment of the Romney Street caravan park remains the two caravans which have been sited in the former car park and which are adjacent to 'Poldu'. Cllr Irene Roy provided an update from SDC which stated that SDC do not have the power under planning law to insist that these homes are removed and that they instead need to rely on the good will of Serenity Homes to remove them. Serenity Homes have always said that they will not remove the homes unless they are legally obliged to do so.

Cllr Jeffery stated that he did not agree with the stance that SDC have taken on this matter and had written to Cllr Roy accordingly. The assertion that SDC do not have the power under planning law to enforce removal of the two homes may be true but they DO have the power to remove them under the 2013 Mobile Homes Act, which states that the authority issuing the Site Licence (SDC) can **at any time** change the conditions of the site licence. The three points on which they can enact a change are :

1. The number of homes
2. The size of the homes
3. The positioning of the homes.

SDC could therefore have enforced removal of the two offending mobile homes by changing the licence in relation to either or both points 1 and 3 above.

It was RESOLVED that the Clerk initiate the formal process to raise a complaint with SDC stating that they have not acted correctly with regard to the 2013 Mobile Homes Act. They could have changed the licence at any point so why did they not do this? If not addressed, then this can then be escalated to the Ombudsman.

Finally, in order to overcome the issue of the two mobile homes overlooking 'Poldu' a huge fence has been erected by Serenity Homes. A structure of this size should have been subject to planning permission, which has not been sought.

8. **Romney Street and East Hill Winter Preparations**

Cllr Jeffery reported that he had spoken with Carol Valentine and Mike Payton of Kent Highways who confirmed that they would be continuing with the gritting of East Hill this winter. They also agreed to put in four extra salt bins. The Clerk was asked to check how much salt we currently have stored at Filston Farm and to order some more in 20kg bags if necessary.

9. **Playground Upgrade**

Another £10,000 funding has been obtained, this time from the National Lottery Awards for All Scheme. Enover Environmental Trust have donated £20,000 and Tesco Bags for Life a further £2,000. The total cost of the new playground is £40,000. The Parish Council had originally pledged £20,000 of their reserves towards the cost but as we have been successful in obtaining funding, the most they will have to contribute is £8,000. The Clerk advised that the £8,000 of CIL money which we received last year and have still not spent, could be used to cover the remaining cost of the playground which would effectively mean the project will have had zero cost to the tax payer.

Work to remove the play equipment will start week commencing 14th October and the new equipment and surfacing will be installed week commencing 28th October. The playground will be closed for around three weeks.

10. **Grounds Maintenance**

It was agreed that this item was more relevant to the Amenities Meeting and would therefore be discussed then.

11. **Noticeboards**

Following an email from a local resident requesting the Parish Council consider replacing the noticeboard outside the Village Hall, it was RESOLVED that the Clerk purchase a new board up to the value of £400.

12. **Communication**

- a) The Clerk reported that whilst at a conference last month, she had discovered that KCC would next cease to provide and host free parish website. All Parish Councils will now need to pay for their own websites and it was therefore RESOLVED that the Clerk start to obtain some quotes for this work to be done.
- b) The need for a social media policy was discussed. At September's Parish Council meeting, a member of the public emphasised the importance of Facebook as a forum for debate and requested that new councillors join. The Chairman explained that individual members could not enter debate via this forum as the Council only exists when it meets as a body and therefore decisions can only be taken at a meeting. The Clerk pointed out however that any member could answer questions of a factual nature and that this should be encouraged. In order to clarify these points, a social media policy should be adopted. The Clerk agreed to undertake some research in order to see if there is a template we can use.

13. **Shoreham Sculpture Trail 2020**

The request from a local artist to display a sculpture in the Centenary Wood as part of next year's Shoreham Sculpture Trail was considered. Whilst members felt the new woodland would be an ideal spot for an installation, it was felt that due to amount of glass involved, it would be an inappropriate setting for this particular piece. The bottles used for the installation could easily smash, leaving broken glass on the floor or, as it would be on display for some three weeks, it could be deliberately vandalised. It would be unrealistic to ask that this sculpture be supervised at all times or indeed taken down and re-erected each weekend and so on that basis, it was RESOLVED that permission should not be granted for this particular piece.

14. **Correspondence/Information**

- a) A request for financial assistance has been received from Citizens Advice North and West Kent. RESOLVED that a donation of £25 be given.

15. **Financial Matters**

Accounts/Payments: The schedule of payments, as well as an extra payment for September's grass cutting for £350, was approved.

16. Dates of next meetings (all starting at 7:30pm unless otherwise stated)

- a) Planning/Amenities Meeting : Wednesday 16th October 2019, Shoreham Village Hall
- b) Planning/Council Meeting : Wednesday 6th November 2019, Shoreham Village Hall
- c) Planning : Wednesday 20th November 2019, Shoreham Village Hall

The meeting closed at 21.53

Sarah Moon, Clerk to Shoreham Parish Council