

PARISH COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING
25th APRIL 2019
AT IGHTHAM VILLAGE HALL

PRESENT: Cllr M Willingham (Chair), County Cllr Rayner, Borough Cllr Mr Robin Betts, Alison Sollis, TMBC, PCSO Mark Thomas, The Parish Clerk and 18 parishioners including 3 Parish Councillors.

Apologies: Tom Tudenghat MP, Jason Murray and James Reid, The Ightham Club and Jean Stirk

The Chairman opened the meeting by welcoming everyone.

Mark Thomas, PCSO said that he has been covering Ightham for 10 years and that his area had recently expanded to cover Borough Green, Platt, Shipbourne, Fairseat and Stansted. There have been 2 recent crimes/incidents in Ightham including an accident involving a pedestrian at Dark Hill roundabout and a burglary in Common Road. Regarding the burglary, Mark asked residents to be vigilant and to report any alarms that go off as not all are connected to the police. The police are still looking for witnesses and information on the A25 incident as they received some conflicting reports.

Alison Sollis from TMBC spoke about the new waste and recycling collection starting in September.

The new waste and recycling contract was awarded in March 2019 and the changes will come into effect in September 2019. The new contract is between Tonbridge and Tonbridge Wells. The County Council has the disposal contract.

One of the changes is that there will now be collections on bank holidays apart from Christmas Day and New Years Day. A lot of work is being done now to ensure that everything is in place for September including an upgrade of the IT systems, new vehicles, new bins and the sign up for the garden waste. A number of roadshows have been organised and a further communication will be sent in August about the new collection and calendar.

The reason for the changes are that we need to recycle more. TMBC have remained at 41% waste recycling and they would like to remove as much from the black bin as possible and improve recycling of food waste.

There will be a weekly food waste collection and everyone will get a caddy which will use compostable liners. All food waste can be disposed except oils and liquids. The bin is fully lockable so that flies and animals cannot get in. It is recommended that people name their bins. All food waste goes to Blaise Farm where it is converted into fertiliser.

The green box will remain for paper, magazines and card. Larger cardboard boxes can be flat packed. Waste will go to the local mill to be recycled.

The green lidded bin will be used for mixed recyclables including bottles, plastics, tin and cartons.

The black bin will be used for non-recyclables including soft plastic, foam, wrappers, pump dispensers.

There will be additional collections for textiles, small electricals and batteries. They should be placed in a small pastic bag with the green lidded bin.

Garden waste will be chargeable at £40 per year (or £35 for 2 years if you sign up early) and you will received a brown 240 litre bin. You can purchase an additional bin for £25.

Properties that are unable to store the recycling bin will get a reusable bag.

Leaflets have been sent out with the council tax bills and there will be a schools programme and an app.

Stickers will be placed on bins to remind people what goes where.

You can exchange the black bin for a smaller bin eventually. TMBC will be happy to take back unused bins and will reuse them.

Cllr Betts said that the symbols on plastics should be ignored, you just need to sort plastic by its rigidity and colour. Only clear rigid plastic can be recycled at the moment. Any black plastic and flower pots should go into the black bin.

The collection crew will check the contents of the bins and may not collect if the wrong materials are put into bins or the materials are heavily contaminated.

A question was asked about whether TMBC would have its own recycling centre? Apparently it is being considered and Cllr Rayner said that he was encouraging this.

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to Alison for her presentation.

The Minutes of the 2018 meeting were approved as a true record of the meeting. They will be available on the website.

The Chairman gave his report:

Cllr Willingham began by thanking everyone for attending and thanking our MP Tom Tugendhat, our County Councillor, Harry Rayner, our Borough Councillor, Robin Betts and fellow Parish Councillors.

Cllr Willingham reported that the lights in the recreation ground that were vandalised have now been fixed and are on a timer which will hopefully deter future vandalism.

The Scouts Hut in the Recreation Ground is progressing well we will receive a report later in the meeting.

The Flood Action Group have been meeting regularly and we now have a grant from our County Councillor which will be used towards bridge widening.

The Parish organised a litter pick on 30th March which was well attended and we collected over 20 sacks of rubbish. Thanks to all those who took part.

We have lost 2 long standing Councillors; Cllr Edwards and Cllr Brierley, and we would like to extend thanks for all their hard work over the last 20 years.

Thanks to Bob Lee-Amies who has maintained the war memorial and recreation ground for many years and has now retired.

We have an ongoing problem with speeding in the village and have appointed Les Henry Associates who will gather information and make recommendations. We are intending to put in some speed indicator devices on Fen Pond Road, Bates Hill and Borough Green Road subject to his recommendations. We will need to work together with Highways to take matters forward.

We continue to receive around 9-10 planning applications a month from TMBC for our opinion and the Parish Council is generally supportive of all but a very few applications.

We haven't raised our precept this year so there will be no change to the parish element of council tax.

We have been approached by Shoreham Aircraft Museum about putting up a memorial stone on the grass strip between the church and the bungalows on Fen Pond Road. This is to commemorate a World War II pilot whose aircraft came down in a nearby field. We are in the process of obtaining the necessary permission.

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to fellow Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk. Two further Councillors have recently stood down and we are looking for new Councillors to co-opt.

Parish Council Finance

The Clerk gave a summary of our financial position. Ightham Parish Council froze the Parish Precept this year. Our annual routine expenditure is around £35-£40k and we have spent £70 on new Scout hut. We have earmarked reserves for a new village hall roof, road traffic calming and signage and levelling the football pitch.

BOROUGH REPORT

Cllr Betts gave an update on the Local Plan. He said that potentially it was the biggest thing to affect Ightham. The Local Plan is the development plan for future housing up to 2031. In TMBC there is a need to build 680 houses a year. TMBC submitted their plan at the end of January 2019 (had it be delayed the housing numbers would have been increased to 839 houses a year in line with the new National Planning Policy Framework). As representative for the Ward, Cllr Betts had spoken to many local residents who had concerns about the Local Plan and particularly the Borough Green Gardens development which would make up 40% of the housing needs for the whole Borough. Cllr Betts felt that this was a disproportionate allocation. There isn't the infrastructure to support such development; our roads are already congested and journey times long without an extra 3,000 houses.

The Local Plan has gone to the Inspectors and there will be a Hearing; this is likely to be delayed as TMBC are still providing evidence with regard to infrastructure. Cllr Betts said that Ightham Parish Council had contributed towards a fund to challenge the Local Plan.

Larkfield has recently undergone a £1m refurbishment and has been awarded the Quest Stretch Award, which is the top award for leisure centres and is only held by 12 other leisure centres in the UK.

COUNTY REPORT

Cllr Rayner is our County Councillor and is also Parish Councillor on Wrotham Parish Council along with Cllr Betts. Cllr Rayner shared concerns about the Local Plan and reported that The 6 Parishes Alliance of Ightham, Platt, Wrotham, Borough Green, Stansted and Plaxtol have clubbed together to raise awareness about air which is particularly bad in Seal which falls outside our Borough. There have been serious problems in the way that TMBC has presented the representations to the Local Plan and this has been taken up with the Inspectors.

In challenging the Borough Green Gardens proposal, the Parish Alliance must come up with an alternative development site and Kent County Council have recently released some minerals land at Aylesford Sandpit. This isn't within AONB or MGB, unlike Borough Green Gardens, and would provide a suitable alternative proposal.

With regard to recycling facilities in Kent, there are 20 recycling facilities near to Ridham Dock and up to 25 vessels a month leave the dock with recycled materials that will feed power stations.

Cllr Willingham gave thanks to Cllrs Betts and Rayner.

REPORTS FROM PARISH ORGANISATIONS Reports were received from various village organisations on their activities over the past year. Highlights below:

St Peters Church – Rev Tim Hatwell said that 2018 had been a good year; they still produce the Parish Magazine which goes to 50% Ightham households. The Church has been having monthly breakfasts which have attracted more families and they are also hoping to have a summer BBQ. Work is due to start imminently to render the brickwork which dates back to 12th century, it will cost around £30k as it is a Grade I listed building and will require an Architect. Work is due to take around 6 weeks and there will be a heritage day in June to explain the works. They are also planning an extension to the Church Centre which is used for Sunday breakfast and the Parent and Toddler Group. Planning permission has been granted and they are currently looking for tenders.

Ightham Primary School – David Sherhod reported that the school had had a successful year academically and recent reading results put the school in the top 10% nationally and in the top 10% for all subjects for 7 year olds. They do well with 11 plus results with a pass rate of 40-50%. The school has had some recent sporting successes and do well in cross-country, cricket, swimming, rugby and netball. They recently won the Eco Flag Gold Award and reintroduced Forest School last September. They are currently working towards being a Heritage School and having a Science Mark. They are very proud of their links with the local community including the Church and Ightham Mote. The recent Ofsted Inspection went well and a further inspection has been recommended with a view to it being ranked as outstanding.

Ightham District Gardens Club - Pippa Coulthard reported that they had a good year in 2018 with talks and shows. She gave thanks to the Parish Council for the use of the village hall and to Ightham Mote and asked that anyone who wanted to join should get in touch.

Scouts – Cllr Holden gave a report on behalf of the Scouts. The construction is progressing and the roof completed. The appearance of the building will be greatly enhanced once the cladding goes on. The building is due to be completed at the end of June and the formal opening will be in September 2019. The Scouts gave thanks to the Architect and Engineer and to the local business community for donated materials. They also gave thanks to The Parish Council and to all those who have given support to the Scouts. They are still looking for financial contributions. The Party in The Car Park will be on 22nd June which will be a fund raising event. They have had an active year with a trip to Jersey last summer and various activities; hikes, canoeing, sailing, visits and summer camp. They currently have around 30 Beavers, 30 cubs and 30 Scouts and 40% members are now girls. There is a waiting list and they also need more volunteers.

Ightham Football Club – James Hitchcock reported that the Club won all 4 Sevenoaks trophies in 2018 for the first time in 100 years. The Club has temporarily moved to Platt whilst the Scout building is being completed. They are looking forward to coming back to Ightham and hope to attract some younger players.

Ightham Club – A short report was read out on behalf of the Ightham Club.

Ightham Mote - Emma reported that Ightham Mote had 150,000 visitors in 2018 and had a successful Easter. They are continuing with flood defence work and are installing some new car parking machines. There are some new tours of previously unseen rooms every Monday and Wednesday.

The WI – Helen Johnson - The WI meet on the second Tuesday of each month. They have several new members and now have 49 members with 35-40 at each meeting. They have various speakers and have recently started to play boules at the George and Dragon. The WI celebrated 100 years last year and Ightham WI will celebrate 100 years this year.

Ightham Tennis Club – Cllr Mitchem reported that the Tennis Club now has 86 adult members and 48 juniors. They are due to get the patio relayed and have had a recent break in. They have LTA membership which means that they get 13 pairs of tickets to Wimbledon. Sam Smith is the Coach.

Ightham History Project – A short report was read out on behalf of the Ightham History Project. They gave thanks for all of the items donated. A lot of indexing has been done so it is easier to find items. David Williams is at the Archive on the second Monday of each month. They hope to have an open day in June.

The Chairman thanked everyone for attending the meeting, which closed at 9.40 pm

DRAFT