

Minutes of the Meeting of Newenden Parish Council held on 30 November
in the village hall at 7.30 pm

Present:

Councillors

Mr A Neilson (chairman)
Mrs R Edmonds
Mrs J Eldridge
Mr B Livesey
Mr C Turnbull

Clerk

Mr J Leeves

Members of the Public

None.

Apologies for Absence

1. None.

Declarations of interest

2. None.

Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October

3. It was resolved that the minutes of the meeting on 5 October having been circulated be approved as a correct record.

Matters arising from minutes of meeting on 5 October

Village sign

4. Councillor Eldridge had completed repainting the village sign and it had been re-erected. Councillors thanked Councillor Eldridge for an excellent job.

Speed indication equipment

5. Councillor Livesey had been in touch with Rolvenden Parish Council about the loan of their speed indicator. Rolvenden Parish Council would charge a hiring fee of £200.00 per month and would expect the equipment to be insured as it cost £4,500.00. As explained the equipment could be set to record speed without indicating it.

The equipment would have to be attached to a pole at the roadside, but this could easily be a post holding a road sign. Councillors agreed to hire the equipment in April or May 2011 and Councillor Livesey would contact Mr Hoad of Rolvenden Council to make the arrangements. As to insurance it was felt that this could be added to the insurance policy or an additional payment made to Rolvenden so that they could add it to their insurance policy. It was felt that although there was only a remote chance of an accident in which a vehicle would collide with the equipment public liability insurance should also be obtained. The clerk was requested to establish from the Council's insurers the cost of public liability insurance and how much insurance would be for theft and damage to the equipment.

Reports

Planning

Kebab van: extended trading hours and advertising signs

6. Councillor Eldridge mentioned that she had looked at the Ashford Borough Council planning website and the application from the owner of the kebab van for extended trading hours had not yet been determined.

7. The kebab van, the Bodiam Ferry and Gardenscape all had various signs advertising their businesses on both sides of the A268 around Newenden bridge. The signs were all felt to be unsightly and Councillors thought that any complaint should be made against all of the signs and not just that advertising the kebab van. Councillor Eldridge agreed to contact the Planning Department of Ashford Borough Council.

Planning Applications

8. The clerk advised that Ashford Borough Council had recently been making changes to their planning application procedure. There had been some improvements in the layout of notifications of new applications and decisions sent to the clerk. The clerk explained that it would be possible to send Councillors details of applications by forwarding the lists if they wished. Councillors felt that they could view these on the website as they could with decisions. It was agreed that as planning applications for Newenden were rarely if ever referred to committee the clerk need not advise Councillors of Planning committee meetings.

9. As the clerk now worked in Sandhurst the practical arrangements for collecting and delivering applications were very simple and caused no timing difficulties and could be continued. However, if the application did not have any plans attached to it there would be no need to circulate it as Councillors could send their comments to the clerk by e-mail.

Highways

10. Councillors had agreed to participate in a scheme whereby Kent Highway Services provided a jumbo bag of salt/grit to be spread about in the event of snow. Highway Services wanted to know where the bag should be delivered. The chairman

commented that he had attended a recent presentation by Highway Services and a large bag of salt weighed about a ton. It was therefore a very large amount and somebody would have to take responsibility for spreading it. Moreover it needed to be kept dry which would argue for the bag being stored by Mr Bourne in his yard where it would also be safe from pilferage. Although Councillor Edmonds felt that it would be invaluable to have the salt for Lossenham Lane as the corner and hill at the end of the lane always became very icy, Councillors reluctantly felt that as it was not apparent who would help to spread it and location was difficult that the parish should not take delivery.

Police

11. Councillor Livesey reported that there was no police news. He had however looked into the situation relating to a neighbourhood watch scheme. It appeared that there had at one time been a scheme in Newenden of which the co-ordinator was listed as being Councillor Edmond's husband. Councillor Edmonds explained that he had resigned and the records had not been amended.

A neighbourhood watch scheme required somebody to organise it and Councillors felt that the proposals should be put to the township meeting on 1 February.

Clerk's Report

12. The clerk reported that the Lord Lieutenant of Kent had invited Councillors to his annual service on 29 March 2011 in Canterbury Cathedral.

13. The clerk circulated a letter he had received from English Heritage giving the details of the listing of the telephone kiosk.

Finance

Financial Statement for 30 November

14. The clerk briefly outlined the items of anticipated expenditure and explained that it would be necessary to transfer £500.00 from the reserve to the current account early in the New Year. This would not take the reserve account below the recommended minimum of four months precept. It was resolved that the financial statement to 30 November be approved and a copy is attached to these minutes.

Accounts for payment.

15. The following accounts were approved for payment:

Village Hall Management Ct	Discretionary grant	£1,680.82
Mr S Siggery	Mowing children's playground	£192.00

Appointment of internal auditor

16. The clerk reported that he had asked the internal auditor for Sandhurst what he would charge for auditing Newenden's accounts. The fee would be £100.00. The clerk explained that there was very little work involved and that this represented

100% increase on the fee charged by the previous auditor. Councillor's felt that the clerk should try to find an auditor who would charge less.

Precept for 2011-12

17. The clerk had previously circulated calculations showing the trend of expenditure for the Council's activities over the previous four years. Councillors noted that a reduction in the cost of insurance had been effected. This had also resulted in a reduction in the level of discretionary grant to the village hall because this too was to cover insurance on the building.

18. The clerk commented that the Government had asked Councils to freeze the Council tax and it was likely that local councils would be unable to increase their Council tax. Even if they could increase the tax it would have to be sanctioned by the Borough Council and only a very small rise was likely to be permitted.

19. Councillors examined the trend of expenditure and noted that the cost of mowing the children's playground had increased progressively over the years. The work was too little to justify a tender, but the clerk was asked to write to the contractor and find out what he intended to charge for the coming year.

20. Councillors felt that the precept for 2011-12 could be maintained at the current level of £5,000. The reserve was still considered to be adequate to meet any unforeseen expenditure. The chairman commented that Ashford Borough Council were about to announce the results of their review of the concurrent functions grant and it was likely that rural parishes such as Newenden would receive a greater increase than urban ones.

Any other business

Dates of meetings in 2011

21. Councillors agreed the following dates for meetings in 2011.

February 1 at 7.00 pm followed by Township meeting at 8.00 pm

22 March Annual Parish meeting

17 May Annual Parish Council meeting

19 July

4 October

29 November

22. In discussing the dates of next year's meetings Councillors noted that there would be local council elections on 5 May 2011.

Township matters

23. The chairman referred to the agreement between the Selmes Trust and the Parish Council for the Council to manage Selmes Trust lands. Mrs Butler was in the process of drawing up an agreement setting out the nature of the management contract. The clerk explained that it would be necessary to maintain accounts but that as income and

expenditures were not that great there would not be a great deal of administration involved. The chairman added that the Selmes Trust still being a charity would maintain any administrative requirements of the Charity Commission.

Children's Playground

24. Councillor Edmonds reported that Mr Golding had inspected the children's playground equipment but not repaired the picnic table which he considered to be fairly firm. He had however repaired the wooden sprung horse. He had also obtained a quotation for wood to replace the rungs on the ladder on the climbing frame, but wondered whether the whole ladder should be replaced by the makers of the equipment. Councillors felt it would be cheaper were Mr Golding to replace the defective rungs. Councillor Edmonds would ask him to undertake the necessary repairs.

Dates of next meetings

25. The next meeting of the Parish Council would be on 1 February 2011 in the village hall. It would be followed by a township meeting at 8.00 pm.

Chairman.....

Date.....