

BARCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning and Community Services Committee held at the Sports Pavilion, Barcombe on Thursday 4th March 2010 at 7.10 p.m.

1597. Present: Councillors N C Lear, C M Arbenz, J O Cornwell, D J Lloyd, A J MacGillivray, R Williams and A Pearce

1598. Apologies for absence: Received from Cllr D Skan

1599. Confirmation and Signature of the Minutes of the Last Meeting: The minutes of the meeting held on 7th January 2010 were approved at the Parish Council meeting on 19th January 2010.

1600. Declarations of Interest: Cllr N C Lear over minute 1603 and Cllr N C Lear, J O Cornwell and R Williams re minute 1607.

1601. Urgent Business pursuant to Standing Order No. 16: There was none.

1602. Village Action Plan: Cllr A J MacGillivray reported on plans for the public workshop on Monday 8th March in the Village Hall. The aim is to elicit the public's views on the initial results of the Action Plan questionnaire so that plans can be formulated for presentation to the Annual Parish Meeting on 20th April. Over 50 invitations to individuals and organisations have been sent and representatives from organisations such as AirS, Lewes DC, the WI and local trades people will lead sessions on topics including housing, the environment, recreation and leisure, needs of older people etc. Cllr MacGillivray will chair the evening with Cllr N Gant presenting the data acquired so far.

1603. Affordable housing: The properties have now been allocated and Cllr A J MacGillivray described the nomination process; comments made by the parish council to LDALC about the process and its flaws, and a somewhat defensive response from officers at Lewes DC; and the policy adopted by Lewes DC in November 2009 which confirmed the importance of "local connections" in its housing allocation policy in rural areas like Barcombe. It is hoped that at some stage a post project review will be undertaken.

It is likely that Hastoe will organise a formal opening. Thoughts about who might be asked to open the development were aired and Cllr A J MacGillivray recommended the Earl of Lytton, who might be ideal if the intention was to spread news of the success to a wider audience. However, most of the committee felt that Cllr MacGillivray should perform the deed to recognise his role in driving the project to a successful conclusion. Ultimately the decision will rest with Hastoe.

The parish council sympathised with complaints about the installation of close boarded boundary fencing on the new development but despite its best efforts Hastoe was unwilling to change.

Cllr J O Cornwell asked if a site visit to see the new properties could be organised – the Clerk will ask Hastoe.

1604. Consultation regarding Rural Housing Policy: The Clerk was asked to resend this to the Chairman.

1605. Lewes DC Rural Settlement Survey: This had been circulated by the Clerk. It was agreed the document was reasonably accurate but Cllrs D J Lloyd, J O Cornwell and A J MacGillivray agreed to review the document in detail. The Committee was happy with the proposed clustering arrangements with other local parishes – Wivelsfield, Chailey and Newick.

1606. ESCC Waste and Minerals Strategy: Our comments have been acknowledged by ESCC.

1607. Village halls: Cllr N C Lear, the parish council's appointed representative to the New Village Hall Committee, reported the current financial position in the light of potential plans to begin construction, even if only phase one of the development could be completed initially. A brief paper, attached as appendix 1 to these minutes, concluded that a relatively modest top up payment from the parish council, funded by a PWLB loan over 25 years, might be required. This would allow the contract to be signed with the builder and construction to start. After a discussion, which agreed on the need for urgent but widespread public notification by way of a house to house mailing to inform residents that this matter will be discussed at the next parish council meeting on 16th March 2010, it was agreed, subject to aforesaid condition, that the Committee would recommend the parish council make a contribution to the funding of the new village hall by committing now to raise money by a loan of up to a maximum of £29,000 (twenty nine thousand pounds) if required.

1608. East Sussex Rural Forum: Cllr N C Lear is attending on behalf of the parish council

1609. Barcombe web site – clubs and societies: A request had been received for details to be available on the web site. It was agreed this would enhance the attractiveness of the web site, whilst still keeping its functionality relatively simple. It was agreed Cllr A Pearce will discuss practicalities with Cllr N Gant.

1610. Correspondence: A letter from Lewes DC regarding the name and postal address of the new village hall was referred to the New Village Hall Committee.

1611. Outstanding Action Points: These had been covered in the agenda

1612. Close of meeting: There being no further business to discuss the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.25 pm.

Appendix 1 to PCS Committee minutes 4th March 2010

I urge the committee to recommend the parish council to make a contribution to the funding of the new village hall by committing now to raising money by a loan if needed.

The reasons for doing so are:

1. The present village hall is in a parlous state. It may not survive even the nine months needed to build the new one. There are insufficient funds to repair it.
2. To begin work on the new hall, the trustees need to know that they can complete the job to the point when the old hall can be handed over to the contractor, since the old hall is part payment.
3. The project team has raised almost enough money to sign the building contract. Not enough to finish the job but enough to achieve a new hall with some work to do.
4. Once started, more money will be attracted, so that the trustees may not need any help at all from the Parish Council. What the trustees are looking for is a commitment by the Parish Council to raise a certain amount by a loan *if needed*.
5. The amount of loan commitment that is needed **now** to enable the trustees to start the work is **£29,000**. The amount needed will reduce as more funds come in. The amount is likely to be lower by the time of the parish council meeting on the 16th.
6. I am conscious that it already seemed good to the Parish Council to raise a loan of £35,000 to buy the Cobbs Mead site. That money will bear fruit only when the new hall is built. The further loan now requested will, for every £10,000, cost a Band D ratepayer 2p per week, or £1.07 per year. The figures for £29,000 are 6p per week, £3.11 per year. Our precept would still be among the lowest in the neighbourhood.
7. A parish loan is a fair way of spreading the costs among the future population.
8. Although the decision will be made by the full parish council, a recommendation from this committee will ensure it goes on the agenda and gets full scrutiny, including from any members of the public who may have other views.

Nick Lear
4th March 2010